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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Shelby Lynn Johnson entitled "Reclaiming Memory's Terra Incognitas: Uncovering the Self in Frances Burney's The Wanderer." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

Misty G. Anderson, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Heather Hirschfeld, Katy Chiles

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Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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# Reclaiming Memory's *Terra Incognitas*:

# Uncovering the Self in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Shelby Lynn Johnson
May 2012

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May 2012
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## DEDICATION

*For Mom*

*I am where I am because you showed me the way*

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# Abstract

*Exploring Memory's Terra Incognitas* explores two narrative concerns in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*: Juliet's opacity as a heroine and her troubling entrance in the novel disguised in blackface, only to be later revealed as white and British. This project argues that both Juliet's lack of interiority and racial instability represent Burney's sensitivity to changing notions of the self at the end of the 18th century. Drawing on Dror Wahrman and Joseph Roach's recent work on historical notions of the self, theater, performance, I suggest that Burney's maligned last novel represents a generic achievement in the history of the novel, but also displays a profound awareness of the challenges of representing and remembering minority, especially black, narratives of the self in history. Individual chapters investigate *The Wanderer*'s response to the challenge of testifying to the slave revolt in Haiti, to the "bleaching" of Imoinda on stage in Thomas Southerne's adaption of Aphra Behn's novella, and to the quotidian meaning of the Mansfield Decision in a culture saturated by an already complex consumer and colonial past.

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# Introduction

Mediating the Self: Memory as Self-Performance in *The Wanderer*

"To remember, we need others."[1]

## I. Accessing a Shifting Self: The Challenge of Knowing Another

Paul Ricoeur in his magisterial *Memory, History and Forgetting* suggests that any revelation of an "essential" self is always already deferred because of the grammatical limitations of language. We respond to questions of "Who am I?" with answers of "What I am (what I remember about the past and myself)" – psychological and linguistic responses which crucially substitute and defer access to identity by situating the self within a remembered history and a local environment (81). Ricoeur's insight suggests that the act of accessing a self occurs within relational points of contact, or between a self and a sense of time, between a self and the material spaces and objects of the environment, and between a self and another. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke identifies memory as a crucial operating device both in providing the materials out of which a self is constructed, and in providing stability and unity to self-narration: "Memory, in an intellectual creature, is necessary in the next degree to perception. It is so great a moment, that where it is wanting all the rest of our faculties are in great measure useless" (II.10.8). Both Locke and Ricoeur, in other words,

[1] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: Chicago UP, 2000), 120.

suggest that memory plays a crucial role in facilitating construction of the self. Locke's notion of the remembering, conscious self, furthermore, had particular resonance for the eighteenth century as a structuring aesthetic principle. Novelists, such as Lawrence Sterne in *Tristam Shandy*, struggled to render in fictional form the processes by which individuals fashioned a stable history of themselves. *Tristam Shandy*, of course, sharply challenged such an autobiographical project by humorously depicting the recursive nature of any attempt to render a narrative of the self.

Frances Burney's fourth novel, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814), engages with this notion of the deferred self in multiple ways. If a self negotiates the narration of identity by reference to external objects, spaces, environments, and public histories and internal memories of the past, Burney's novel complicated that project by rendering her main character nameless, disguised in blackface, without an identifiable past, and struggling to represent effaced historical narratives and memories in a period already fraught by the trauma of the French Revolution, suggesting that accessing a self is a fundamentally fragmented project. What Burney perceives as the challenge of accessing a stable self localized in narratives the opacity and fragmentation became a guiding aesthetic principle. Even the revelation of Juliet's story is fragmented. We only come to discover Juliet's story near the end of the novel in bits and pieces, as Juliet tells parts of her story to different characters. We eventually discover that Juliet is a young Englishwoman who has been raised in France because she is the unacknowledged daughter of a marriage between an English peer and a woman below him in status. Both of Juliet's parents died before she could be introduced to her English family, but she is,

despite the current head of her family's decision not to acknowledge her, the heiress of a fortune. Because this family patriarch, Lord Denmeath, refuses to acknowledge her, Juliet remains in France to be educated. The action of the novel is precipitated when Juliet has to flee France in order to escape a forced marriage with a tyrannical French revolutionary official who compels her to marry him in order to gain access to her English wealth. Once in England, Juliet must keep her own counsel in order not to provoke Lord Denmeath into alerting her French husband of her whereabouts. Ultimately, Juliet's notion of her own self is already fraught with questions before the novel begins. In many ways, she represents an "unlocalized" self, or a self not situated within any relational network of family, friend, or country.

In *The Wanderer,* Burney is particularly interested in depicting spectators' attempts to access and know a self. On her passage to England, Juliet meets many of the characters she will interact with throughout the rest of the novel, and their reactions to her become a kind of recursive response which will reappear in other interactions with her: Elinor Joddrel, a young female radical who energetically espouses the ideals of the French Revolution; Mrs. Maple, Elinor's guardian, who reluctantly gives Juliet shelter during the first quarter of the novel; Mrs. Ireton, a sarcastic, biting older woman with whom Juliet will eventually work as a companion; Mr. Ireton, Mrs. Ireton's lazy son; and Albert Harleigh, a sensitive gentleman who falls in love with Juliet, but is hampered in his courtship by Elinor's ardently vocal love for him. Many of the characters Juliet encounters onboard ship regard her with suspicion because of her troubling initial entrance in the novel as a black woman, a disguise taken up in order to flee the violence

of revolutionary France. Everyone, including – crucially, as we will see – the reader believes that Juliet is precisely what she at first appears to be. The disclosure that Juliet's black skin is dyed does not function, however, as a moment of complete narrative revelation. While other characters in the novel, as well as the reader, now know (or think they know) Juliet's true racial identity, this revelation is finally only one part of Juliet's history – the reader still does not know why she has disguised herself in the first place. Indeed, Mrs. Ireton's description of the effect of Juliet's transformation highlights the difficulty of accounting for any authentic representation of Juliet's identity. After her transformation, Mrs. Ireton cynically pretends that Juliet still wears make-up – she has merely exchanged blackface for whiteface and rouge: "If I did not fear being impertinent, I should be tempted to ask how many coats of white and red you were obliged to lay on, before you could cover over all that black" (44).

Dror Wahrman in *The Making of the Modern Self* does important work historicizing eighteenth-century understandings of selfhood, the location of which he argues gradually transitioned from the outside in: "What made such views about the doubling, splitting, or transmigrating of identities possible, and to some even plausible, was a non-essential notion of identity that was not anchored in a deeply seated self; which is what rendered it so different from what was to follow" (176). Wahrman argues that a new confidence in the notion of an essential, internalized self had become dominant by the end of the eighteenth century, which makes Juliet's believable performance in blackface that much more difficult to understand on the part of those watching her. When confronted by Juliet, Mrs. Ireton and others attempt to construct their own notion of Juliet's identity and

history using whatever means available to them. Skin color becomes strikingly destabilized in *The Wanderer*, used to mark the extent to which Mrs. Ireton and others depend on the authenticity of Juliet's racial identity, as well as the extent to which they respond with anxiety and fear to the disclosure of the ways race can become constructed. Much of the rest of the novel traces the impact this initial, traumatic loss of confidence has on Juliet's attempts to provide for herself in the face of increasingly ruthless attempts to discover her name and history – or to forget her completely. Her effacement from the community is represented by a comment from Selina Joddrel, a character who is not represented as consciously cruel, that Juliet is "nobody" (147). The memory of Juliet's transformation, evidence both of Juliet's unstable racial identity and her manipulation of those categories, becomes the "what" answering Ricoeur's "who" – in other words, an ultimately inadequate sign of her "self." The painfully slow disclosure of Juliet's history and identity is not only a major plot device in the novel driving the narrative tension, but a choice which engages in a unexpectedly modern meditation on what it means to reveal or remember a "self" at all.

Juliet's shifting racial identity makes her a challenging character to interpret, but the difficulty functions even at a structural level. Juliet, for all that she is the heroine of *The Wanderer*, is a surprisingly opaque character. The reader is rarely privileged with access to her interior thoughts and she is noticeably silent in many of the private conversations and public settings Burney places her in. We see this opaqueness early in the novel when Juliet (known by her pseudonym of Miss Ellis) participates in a private theatrical performance of *The Provok'd Husband* as Lady Townly. In the scene, however, we get

Harleigh's perspective on the relationship between Juliet's portrayal of Lady Townly and her private feelings rather than any interior monologue or spoken statement from Juliet herself. Harleigh, furthermore, uses aspects of Juliet's performance as evidence to make certain kinds of judgments about her virtue, which has been hotly debated in his social circle since the revelation of Juliet's disguise in blackface, which had only recently taken place. If Juliet's blackface is taken by some as evidence for her duplicity, Harleigh takes her virtuosic performance as Lady Townly as evidence of her good character. The character or "genius" Harleigh perceives takes on an emphatically interiorized (or essentialized) meaning as an effusion of natural good feeling, a virtue both Juliet and Lady Townly share, which has provided Juliet with the ability to perform Lady Townly naturally while also giving Harleigh his evidence for her own virtue:

> Whether this excellence were the result of practice and instruction, or a sudden emanation of general genius, accidentally directed to a particular point, was disputed by the critics amongst the audience; and disputed, as usual, with the greater vehemence, from the impossibility of obtaining documents to decide, or direct opinion. But that which was regarded as the highest refinement of her acting, was a certain air of inquietude, which was discernible through the upmost gaiety of her exertions, and which, with the occasional absence and sadness, that had their source in her own disturbance, was attributed to deep research into the latent subjects of uneasiness belonging to the situation of Lady Townly. This, however, was nature, which would not be repressed; not art, that strove to be displayed. (95)

The language becomes particularly slippery and evocative as in this passage as Harleigh's thought process is narrated, as if highlighting the imprecise parameters of Harleigh's pseudo-scientific, observational approach to the enigma of Juliet's interiority. According to Harleigh, what *does* constitute evidence of Juliet's good character, of the authenticity of her interior life? Instead of describing a facial expression or other material evidence to support his conclusion, Harleigh notes an immaterial state of mind – "a certain air of disquietude" – which he discerns and describes "through" the outer layer of Juliet's performance as Lady Townly. Harleigh's reading is thus further complicated because Juliet is, in some sense, not "herself" at the time of observation but performing another person. Harleigh, however, quite confidently decides that the "disturbance" which Juliet reveals while acting is of "nature, which would not be repressed," with "nature" imagined as an authentic, interior feature which must flow *outward*. Harleigh's thought process is fundamentally circular – an internal state of being discerned during a performance becomes evidence for the virtue of Juliet's internal self. The references to immaterial aspects of thought and being – "a certain air of inquietude" and "nature" – in the midst of Juliet's performance underscore *The Wanderer'*s concern over the spectator's leap from the materials of external performance to knowledge of an interior life.[2] This episode helps

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[2] Adam Smith theorized in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that such a leap was theoretically possible through the operation of sympathy. According to Smith, the experience of sympathy involves something more than feeling pity or compassion for the pain of another. Sympathy instead becomes the experience of "fellow-feeling" (a feeling with, not feeling for) the other. Smith's elaboration of the experience of sympathy entails much more than an "impartial spectator," as he called it, simply imagining himself in the position of the "actor:" "The spectator must, first of all, endeavour, as much as he can, to put himself in the situation of the other, and to bring home to himself every little circumstance of distress which can possibly occur to the sufferer. He must adopt the whole case of his companion with all its minutest incidents; and strive to render as perfect as possible, that imaginary change of situation upon which his sympathy is founded" (28). In order to envision the actual position of the other, the act of sympathy demands that the spectator imagine himself as the actor before the gaze of *another spectator*, which assumes, as David

illustrate the ways in which Burney transformed the problem of accessing the self into highly complex narrative forms in *The Wanderer.*

II. Tracing the Past: Resituating Effaced Memories within National Historical Narratives

That Harleigh feels able to make assumptions about Juliet's character based on her performance as Lady Townly is also evidence of another sort: how far Burney is willing to leave interpretation of Juliet's story to others' imaginations throughout much of *The Wanderer.* Because Burney spends most of *The Wanderer* deferring revelation of Juliet's identity and personal history, characters, along with the reader, must try to situate Juliet within an ongoing project of interpreting the past, both her past as well as her place within a shared European past. Ultimately, what other characters (and the reader) *do* know initially is that Juliet has been significantly impacted by one of the most tumultuous historical events of the previous decades – the French Revolution, but particularly the Reign of Terror. The novel, set at the height of the Terror in 1794, calls attention to the traumatic impact of this period in the Revolution by naming it the "dire reign of the terrific Robespierre" (11). Despite her dramatic opening language in the novel, in her preface to the novel Burney curiously minimizes and re-values the continuing effect of

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Marshall argues, that social relations as Smith understands them are inherently theatrical, or as Dror Wahrman described, "Smith wanted to hold to a *doubleness* of personal identity that allows us to both remain ourselves and to experience a transference of identity at the same time," (Marshall 172, Wahrman 188). Smith is less clear on whether this exchange of position results in authentic knowledge of another, or whether it is a meaningful epistemology. Although Smith says that "the secret consciousness that the change of positions … is but imaginary," he argues that the attempt is "sufficient for the harmony of society" (37, 38). Although Burney does not allude to Smith's theory in *The Wanderer,* she does, in a sense, explore the problem of separating a public, or performed, person from private experience.

the French Revolution to peripheral "traces," or an event that may only amount to a historical curiosity:

> I have chosen, with respect to what, in these volumes, has any reference to the French Revolution, a period which, completely past, can excite no rival sentiments, nor awaken any party spirit; yet of which the stupendous iniquity and cruelty, though already historical, have left traces, that, handed down, even but traditionally, will be sought with curiosity, though reverted to with horrour, from generation to generation. (5)

Burney's rhetorical move in emphasizing the historical distance of the French Revolution is probably an attempt to side-step the novel's clear political overtones, yet it also becomes a problem of memory. The "traces" Burney identifies includes such diverse projects as recalling the material impact of revolutionary war and violence on real people. We discover in the course of the novel, for instance, that Juliet in particular has fled from a Frenchman who forces her to marry him in order to gain access to her English inheritance. While her need to escape from an unwanted marriage at first appears to be unrelated to the Revolution, the reader eventually learns that Juliet truly is the victim of revolutionary violence. Her husband uses his position as one of Robespierre's commissioners to coerce her into marrying him by threatening to send her French guardian to the guillotine. Juliet flees from the fear of one of the most infamous apparatus utilized to impose the Revolutionary project.

Although Burney seems more concerned in the preface with showcasing her refusal to engage with politics in *The Wanderer,* the real thrust of her thought is, of course, deeply

political, although perhaps not in a manner we might have expected. Part of the problem is one of definition. Burney sharply constricts the meaning of "politics" and understands it in strictly additive terms as the infusion of prejudice into public rhetoric. Her novels, as she understands them by contrast, seek to represent "general life," or those experiences shared across cultures and traditions. Political rhetoric, rather, she understands as the source of difference and conflict across cultures:

> Such, therefore, – if any such there be, – who expect to find here materials for political controversy; or fresh food for national animosity; must turn elsewhere their disappointed eyes; for here, they will simply meet, what the Author has thrice sought to present them already, a composition upon general life, manners, and characters; without any species of personality, either in the form of foreign influence, or of national partiality. I have felt, indeed, not disposition, – I ought rather, perhaps, to say talent, – for venturing upon the stormy seas of politics; whose waves, forever either receding or encroaching, with difficulty can be stemmed, and never can be trusted. (4)

The aesthetic problem Burney explores in *The Wanderer* is in finding a way to infuse specificity into her portraits of "general life, manners, and characters" without it becoming "partiality." Using Burney's own definition then, the "traces" of the past she examines and the highly singular historical resonance of Juliet's narrative have become a kind of political rhetoric, if one partly stripped of the negative connotations of "partiality." Burney is, therefore, not trying to make a political "statement" at all in *The Wanderer,* but rather attempting to elicit a specific response from her reader – to recall

something about the past – a response which necessitates a reader be engaged with history. Although in her preface Burney defines how her country will psychologically approach communal memories of the French Revolution (with "curiosity" and "horrour"), she, more importantly, assumes that the event *will* be remembered. She accepts that the impact of the French Revolution will become part of England's collective memory, resulting in its own set of fundamentally political questions – Whose memories, which "traces," ought to be recalled and "handed down"? In what ways do the revolutions Juliet's performances signify challenge the historical and racial assumptions of the British audience? How should the community respond to the revolutionary potential Juliet represents?

Although scholars have until recently tended to focus on the novel's imaging of the French Revolution as a past event, this project approaches these questions by exploring the pressures Juliet's performance as a French-speaking, black woman will have on the society she encounters.[3] Juliet, through her initial disguise in blackface, represents a

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[3] Scholarship on *The Wanderer* since the revival of interest in Burney in the late 1980s has tended to result in polarized judgments of *The Wanderer'*s aesthetic worth and its political orientation as a radical or conservative text. Claudia Johnson, for example, in an influential reading of *The Wanderer* in *Equivocal Beings*, reads the novel as both an aesthetic and ideological disappointment: "*The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814) is a work of gigantic ambition and bewildering failure" (165). Johnson focuses her discussion of *The Wanderer*'s failure as a novel in its inability to present a univocal response to the critiques it offers of British society in light of the impact discourses on rights and equality had on Europe during and after the Revolution. Margaret Anne Doody in *The Life in the Works,* however, reads *The Wanderer* in more politically radical terms as one of the earliest British novels to depict a proto-Marxian working class environment and alienation from the apparatus of production. Katharine Rogers, however, in *The World of Female Difficulties,* understands Burney's relationship to the political debates of her time in much more conservative terms, particularly in her imagining of Elinor Joddrel. She contends that Elinor, for all her courage and intelligence, "is impractical, self-deluded, self-indulgent and self-destructive," and that Burney's presentation of Elinor "is a thoughtful conservative criticism of doctrinaire radicalism, without any of the hysteria or narrow closed-mindedness found in such critics as Richard Polwhele and Hannah More" (165). Sara Salih, in an influential article from 1999, is one of the first scholars to address *The Wanderer* in terms of its portrayal of Juliet's blackness and initial status as a colonized "other." She suggests that Burney disguises the real target of her satire, which she identifies as francophobia, with

certain kind of revolutionary potential that made itself evident in multiple ways across the wider trans-Atlantic world, particularly in Saint Domingue, where the first successful slave revolt in history began in August of 1791. Utilizing and adapting the language of the French Revolution, the revolt resulted in 1804 in the creation of Haiti as an independent black slave republic. In this way, Juliet performs the *wrong* past, or those memories the British characters she must associate with would rather erase from their shared history, representing herself as a potential casualty of slavery and slave rebellion, racial prejudice, and revolutionary violence. In this way, Juliet's performances counter received historical accounts of the past in ways which anticipate modern examinations of the relationship between political and ideological hegemonies and memory. Maurice Halbwachs, for instance, in his seminal work *On Collective Memory* famously investigated the methods by which groups construct shared narratives of the past. Some of the features of collective memory which Halbwachs explored were those which allow individual members the option *not* to remember the past to a full extent because, to a certain extent, they must come to rely on group memory to maintain a narrative of the past:

> Our modern societies impose many constraints on people. Without using the same authority and unilateral pressure that primitive tribes employ in regard to their members, modern societies nevertheless penetrate and insinuate themselves

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negrophobia, going so far as to call Juliet's early disguise as a black woman a "red herring" (309). Using *The Wanderer* to illuminate Burney's own political orientation is a profound methodological challenge given the complexity of the work, as evident by the variety of approaches used by Johnson, Doody, Rogers, and Salih.

more deeply into their members because of the multiplicity and complexity of relations of all kinds with which the envelope their members. (49)

Paul Connerton, following up on Halbwachs's thesis, argues in *How Societies Remember* that the mutual creation of a shared sense of history is crucial in constructing and legitimizing a social order: "It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society's past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions" (3). Juliet's history is so disturbing because it questions the univocal historical narrative of Britain's past characters like Mrs. Ireton and Mrs. Howell sanction.

Despite performing a figure at the margins of culture, Juliet's blackface remains in a sense efficacious, however.[4] It accomplishes her immediate, pragmatic project of fleeing France and her tyrannical French husband. If Juliet's blackface functions as a pragmatic tool, it also crucially destabilizes hegemonic narratives of the past, which operated because of British notions of cultural superiority, by functioning as a kind of complicated "reverse mimicry." Conventionally used to describe moments when a colonial other imitates the traditions and fashions of a dominant imperial culture, mimicry, according to Homi Bhabha's articulation in *The Location of Culture*, can illuminate the ways colonized subjects participate in the circulations of power within a dominant culture by

[4] J.L. Austin, of course, argued in *How to Do Things with Words* that certain categories of statements, which he called "performatives" or "speech acts" which do not possess a truth-value, but rather enact an effect or perform an action (5-7). Paul Ricoeur argued that some of the most powerful, or efficacious, speech acts were those statements which made a promise or extended forgiveness (*Memory, History, Forgetting* 492-5). We will see in *The Wanderer* that other performatives, the act of naming, for example, or of providing testimony of the past, moments in the novel I will explore in chapters three and one, respectively, have nearly as weighted an effect.

imitating that culture. While those who attempt to imitate the dominant culture may be left confused by the necessity of suppressing their native identity, mimicry can also function as a way to showcase the potential hollowness of the parts of the culture imitated:

> Mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance with coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha 122-3)

More broadly, therefore, Juliet's disguise as a black woman serves as a critical reminder to the other English passengers of the way revolutionary energy exploded in the Caribbean. As a French-speaking black woman, she represents the ongoing (and eventually successful) slave revolt in Saint-Domingue. "What part of the world might you come from?" Mr. Ireton nervously asks her, "The settlements in the West Indies? or somewhere off the coast of Africa?" (19). Juliet chooses not to respond, and Mr. Ireton does not ask again, perhaps suggesting Burney's awareness that a refugee from the Caribbean would not be likely to share her story in the middle of the night to a group of English passengers who have already demonstrated hostility towards her. But in that moment of deferred narration, other characters allow their own fears and anxieties to write the story for her, an outcome which both restricts Juliet's power to tell her own

story, but also uncovers the fissures where forcefully erased pasts and histories surge back to memory.

## III. Constructing a Reading Community: Interpreting the Multiple Performances in *The Wanderer*

Because of its investigation into the challenges of accessing a shifting, opaque identity during moments of historical stress, *The Wanderer* presented a unique interpretive challenge for its contemporary readers (and for readers today). At crucial moments in the novel, deferred narration precipitated by Juliet's multiple performances expose the sites where *The Wanderer* is at its most unstable generically because those are the places where Burney repeatedly subverts readers' expectations, beginning with Juliet's silence: we *expect* Juliet to tell us her story.[5] Juliet's performances, furthermore, provoked a level of anxiety for characters in the novel only matched by *The Wanderer'*s contemporary readers. These responses to the novel's political orientation became intimately tied up in evaluations of its aesthetic worth. One review in particular demonstrates the way aesthetic judgment became politicized quickly. Although Thomas Babington Macaulay reviewed *The Wanderer* in the 1830s, or over fifteen years after its

[5] While Burney's choice to conceal the history of heroine remains, as I argue, a philosophical and a generic problem, it is not a completely unique aesthetic choice. As Margaret Anne Doody points out, Anne Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* also introduces a heroine who "first appears to us as an unknown, unnamed figure in immediate need of pity and succor; later, when we learn her first name and something of her story from her narrative to her hosts, we still do not know her last name or her whole story. Moreover, the mysterious manuscript, only intermittently legible, that Adeline finds in the ruined Abbey constantly conceals the name and identity of the distressed writer, thus redoubling the motifs presenting the unknowableness of identity" (Doody, "Introduction," xv).

publication, his distance from the original publication date allowed him to remark on the trajectory of Burney's career as a whole. He asserted that the language and style of *The Wanderer* regressed from Burney's earlier style in *Evelina* and *Cecelia.* The specific terms of his comparison, however, highlight the extent to which *The Wanderer* touched a nerve for readers deeply concerned with maintaining a sanitized version of Britain's colonial past, even for readers fifteen years after *The Wanderer'*s publication: "Madame D'Arblay had carried a bad style to France. She brought back a style which we are really at a loss to describe. It is a sort of broken Johnsonese, a barbarous patois, bearing the same relation to the language of Rasselas, which the gibberish of the Negroes of Jamaica bears to the English of the House of Lords" (qtd. Crump 374). Macaulay's critique assumes an idealized British aesthetic style, which *The Wanderer* fails to realize because of its inclusion of variegated linguistic and cultural registers. Against this imagined national style, Macaulay questions if *The Wanderer'*s "degraded" language can even contain meaning or effect change.

Macaulay's judgment illustrates the way Burney's linguistic style and formal structure in *The Wanderer* became a touchstone for interpreting and evaluating the novel. Following the direction Macaulay's critique points towards, in my reading of *The Wanderer* I would like to explore how *The Wanderer'*s contemporary readers would have approached reading and interpreting the novel through analysis of its generic structure. The form of *The Wanderer* would have structured the kinds of reading strategies contemporary readers would have brought to any understanding of the work. Burney's fundamental project in playing with structure in *The Wanderer* seems to be in order to

interrogate the capacity of the novel to depict a certain kind of self fragmented by historical upheaval. If Burney can be said to be committed to portraying Juliet's self at all, in this novel it is not through focused depictions of her *interiority*. This technical decision allowed Burney to explore the process of narrating a self through interactions between self and other. With Juliet, Burney moves from portraying her as the self who observes to the self who *is observed*, focusing on the ways Juliet's self is constructed by the narratives created by her sometimes sympathetic, often hostile readers. Subjectivity for Burney cannot finally be separated from a relational matrix resulting in a self that is continually reconstructed by contact with others. Paul Ricoeur, in *Oneself as Another*, describes that relational matrix as inextricably intertwined: "The selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other" (3).

By focusing on that relational interaction, Burney is also able to examine the ways in which readers approach reading texts by recalling similar texts in the past. In other words, she relies on readers' memories to place Juliet within a wider literary history. This project explores readership by focusing on the kinds of inter-textual, generic allusions that seem particularly crucial in placing *The Wanderer* within a British tradition of prose writing. Each chapter investigates *The Wanderer* within specific rhetorical registers, including testimony and autobiography, theater and performance, and other novels. In *The Wanderer* therefore, we have a novel which produces a sustained meditation on the powerful effect a readership's collective memory of historical, performance, and literary events bears on interpreting a single text. What makes Burney's narrative decisions so

unique, therefore, is that, during those moments of narrative deferral or revelation, Burney references or alludes to the resemblances Juliet's narrative has with other famous stories in the eighteenth-century literary canon or with recent historical events. Readers must *situate* Juliet's story with other stories they remember from literature or history, and many of the replacements Burney insisted upon would have challenged a contemporary reader's sense of Britain's own past. By placing stress on these moments of what we might call generic instability, I hope to follow the methodological path that Ruth Mack traced in *Literary Historicity* as an alternative way to confront form in *The Wanderer*, primarily "by acknowledging that those employing" certain generic forms in a particular historical context "have some awareness of its ability to critique, as well as to participate in, any society's ideological workings" (Mack 22).

Chapter one of this project, "Accounting for Haiti: History, Testimony, and an Ethics of Reception in *The Wanderer*," explores Juliet's representation as a possible refugee of the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue, and argues that she serves as a crucial reminder of Britain's own complicated relationship to the revolt. Moira Ferguson argues, for example, that many in Britain who sympathized with the growing anti-slavery movement developed complicated relationships to abolitionism when the slaves on Saint-Domingue revolted: "Once Britain declared war on France in 1793, championing slaves' rights became anathema – especially in the wake of the successful revolution by slaves and freed Africans in San Domingo" (4). Juliet's story, once revealed, bears striking parallels to those told in the relatively new genre of the slave narrative. Although Juliet does not call herself a slave or even suggest that her story is a kind of (even metaphorically) slave

narrative, other characters *do* call her a slave, indicating that her original close association with Saint-Domingue and her continued silence haunts their attempts to deal with Juliet. Mrs. Maple, in extreme irritation, says, "Why does she not say who she is at once? … I give nothing to people that I know nothing of; and what had she to do in France? Why don't she tell us that?" Mr. Ireton, who has lost interest in Juliet's story, lazily responds "Can such a skin, and such a garb, be worth so much breath?" (29). Mrs. Maple's insistence that she tell her history – and Juliet's refusal to do so – functions as an important acknowledgement of the power of testimony to effect action, while Mr. Ireton's response indicates a recognition that the efficacy of testimonial witness relies on the acceptance and tolerance of the hearer. Although it may seem like an odd choice to discuss autobiography and testimony in relation to Juliet given the opacity of her representation, Leigh Gilmore's seminal work on autobiography, *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation,* suggests that a woman's access to an identity capable of representation in autobiography depends on her access to identities constructed by particular cultures and reading publics. Juliet's peculiarly hostile reading public play a serious role in constricting the patterns and impact of her testimony.

Chapter two, "Rehearsing Imoinda: Bleaching Black Bodies in *Oroonoko* and *The Wanderer,*" argues that Juliet's entrance disguised in blackface and her dramatic bleaching several chapters later in the novel recalls another famous female bleaching from the late seventeenth century: Imoinda's transformation from a black woman in Aphra Behn's 1689 novella *Oroonoko* to a white woman in Thomas Southerne's play a decade later. The revelation that Juliet has convincingly performed race provokes

extreme anxiety for those who see the result of the transformation. Juliet's "bleaching" suggests that a racial identity is not fixed or stable, but fluid and changing, an unusual move given that British conceptions of identity categories was moving towards essentialist notions of the self, as Dror Wahrman suggests.[6] Because Burney does not spend much time throughout most of the novel establishing or depicting an interior life for Juliet, much of her descriptive emphasis in the novel is on the ways selfhood becomes constructed through in cross-relational interactions. Once Juliet's racial position changes, it acts as a virtual domino effect, destabilizing the efforts of others to construct selves in relation to Juliet's own changing self-presentation. The result is an acute anxiety over the authenticity both of actual performances as well as the "performance" of identity.

Juliet's story, finally, imagines itself as one of most famous narratives of the eighteenth century: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe.* In Chapter three, "Forgetting Friday: Making Sense of Juliet as a 'Female Robinson Crusoe,'" I investigate the significance of Burney's decision to call Juliet a "female Robinson Crusoe" near the end of the novel. This designation re-defines Juliet's struggle to achieve financial independence as the penultimate narrative of the "woman alone." Without a name or family history, Juliet in some ways is just as isolated as Crusoe. By re-naming Juliet as a Robinson Crusoe, Burney suggests that Juliet is somehow successful on her "desert

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[6] "Before this transitional moment [last quarter of eighteenth century], race had been basically mutable: changeable either through the effects of climate and the environment, or, in a more specifically eighteenth-century twist, through human interventions in the form of social customs or even individual choice. From the 1770s onward, by contrast, race was gradually and haltingly reconceptualized as an essential and immutable category, stamped on the individual; a transformation resulting in increasing strains in the older climatic or cultural understandings, now ever more on the defensive" (127).

island," and perhaps in some sense she is. She is able to re-enter a wider British community through her marriage to Albert Harleigh and her recognition by members of her family. Sara Salih argues that Juliet's marriage just integrates her back into a society that has emerged unchanged from its encounter with Juliet's racial mutability: "The title of 'female Robinson Crusoe' … signals Juliet's elevation from the position of colonized (or 'slave') to that of colonizer, and it suggests an ironic reversal of perspective" (315). Another interpretation, however, would be that the juxtaposition of the comparison, which I would read as more ironic than true, to Juliet's reintegration into the community casts doubt on the completeness of that assimilation. Robinson Crusoe's importance as a literary character resides not so much in his success as a worker, Michael Seidel suggests, but in his ability to create meaningful fictions able to "make sense" of his island stay ("Varieties," 182-3). If we read the comparison in these terms, we see that Juliet is often not the one who builds fictions, but the object of fiction-building. In other words, other characters to multiple ends, behave as Robinson Crusoes towards her by giving her names and creating stories to fill the vacuum her silence has created. In this sense, Juliet is perhaps less like Robinson Crusoe than Friday, further underscoring the essential irony of the comparison.

In encountering *The Wanderer* and how Juliet functions in the narrative, we must remind ourselves, following Ricoeur, that some "real and symbolic wounds are stored in the archive of collective memory," suggesting that alternative histories and narratives are not truly lost from the community, but often displaced, partially erased, transformed, or appropriated for other purposes (*Memory,* 82). Juliet's silence, her racial mutability,

her reminder of upheaval in the Caribbean represents a traumatic past which cannot be ignored. My focus on questions of form, genre, and reception in this project hopefully does not itself function as an effacement of the real physical and psychological "wounds" Juliet's represents. By analyzing the way Burney's narrative enterprise resulted in particular formal choices, I hope to show that *The Wanderer* deserves reconsideration as both a unique text in the history of colonialism but also a landmark experiment in representing a certain kind of subjectivity, one intimately concerned with envisioning self-construction localized within a sometimes hostile, sometimes sympathetic community of spectators and readers. This subjectivity, Burney shows, cannot finally be considered apart from notions of race, with all its attendant baggage in the eighteenth-century. Juliet's racial mutability ultimately serves as an entry point for accessing the experiences of a forgotten "race of unnamed and unnameable wanderers" (Czechowski 214).

# Chapter I

## Accounting for Haiti: History, Testimony, and an Ethics of Reception in *The Wanderer*

"Here, in these bitter lands of sugar, we feel
submerged by this web of memories,
which scorch us with things forgotten and screaming presences."[7]

### I

In her preface to *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties,* Frances Burney engages in discussion of the purpose of the novel. By doing so, she responds to eighteenth-century critical debates on the value of novel-reading as action, a discussion intimately woven within a consideration of the ethics of reading. The preface lays out two questions: first, what impact should reading produce in the life and mind of the reader? And, second, in order to accomplish this effect, on what subject matter should the narrative focus? Burney, characteristically, chooses to answer the first question by emphasizing the narrative potential inherent in the genre itself as storehouse of life experience, which, through the act of reading, is transferred to the reader:

> Divest, for a moment, the title of Novel from its stationary standard of insignificance, and say! What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? It is, or it ought to be, a picture of

[7] Patrick Chamoiseau, *L'Esclave vieil homme et le molosse* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 17; qtd. Christopher L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008), 39.

> supposed, but natural and probable human existence. It holds, therefore, in its hands our best affections; it exercises our imagination; it points out the path of honour; and gives to juvenile credulity knowledge of the world, without ruin, or repentance; and the lessons of experience, without its tears. (7)

Burney then incorporates the act of reading within a larger pedagogical project, and her instrumental notion of the "lessons of experience" engages with eighteenth-century cognitive models for the acquisition of knowledge. These cognitive models emphasized the accumulative operations of the mind, which form ideas through self-reflection out of discrete sensations.[8] Experience, working as teacher, provided the mind with the objects of thought used to construct knowledge. Novels, according to Burney, could function in a similar way. She thus imagines reading in terms of what Michael McKeon explores as a particularly close relationship between reading and the experimental epistemology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries:

> Broadly speaking, the novel genre came into being in order to engage the multitude of collective crises – political, religious, social, economic, familial, sexual – that arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and often enough can be read fruitfully on the model of experiment. That is, the work of the novelistic plot in this case is to elaborate a sample of experience broad and diverse enough to provide multiple testing grounds for plausibly separating out natural constants from artificial and customary variables. (400)

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[8] John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) offered perhaps the most famous and influential articulation of this cognitive model: "Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? … To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE; in that all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself" (50).

In her preface, Burney uses another term of importance within this epistemological context: probable. She suggests that the subject matter of a novel should depict "probable human existence," illustrating McKeon's premise that "probable belief and knowledge [as] functions of sense perception" were "adapted experimentally across a range of endeavors" throughout the eighteenth century (386). "Probable human existence" within the novel becomes a problematic term because of the way the heroine's representation challenges notions of authenticity, truthfulness, and what counts as real. Juliet enters the novel seeking refuge on a ship leaving revolutionary France for England. Her presence produces anxiety for many characters given that she is a French-speaking black woman. Juliet, as we come to discover, however, has disguised in blackface and is later revealed to be white and British. She is also obviously in severe financial straits, yet she remains silent about her history, limiting the means through which other characters can perceive her as a proper object of charity. Her shifting racial and national identity, her inscrutability, and her poverty would have made her a profoundly difficult character to "experience" because she disrupts a reader's "horizon of expectations," to borrow Hans Robert Jauss's phrase. Burney continually depicts characters "reading" Juliet in a certain way, only to later have those readings upturned. Juliet demanded an ideal reader who could be flexible in response to her fluid self-presentation. Given certain changing notions of the self at the end of the eighteenth century, this imagined ideal reader might ultimately remain an unrealized fiction because of Juliet's "improbable," because unstable, identity. *The Wanderer* could thus be called an "experimental novel" because it imposes an experimental epistemology on the act of reading in order to expose the

fragility of knowledge gained through the indirect experienced transferred through the novel. *The Wanderer* does this by having characters in the novel stand in as emblematic "readers," only to later destabilize them as readers by showing their mistaken evaluations of Juliet's identity. Burney accomplishes this destabilization by depicting both the ineffectualness of sympathetic readers, who often "read" Juliet correctly but fail to effect any change in the way others read her, and the tyranny of hostile readers, who powerfully control interpretations of Juliet throughout the novel. Crucially, Burney's representation of these characters interrogates what constitutes evidence of an authentic, interior self, and how that authentic self can be known and read by different classes of readers.

Juliet's volatile representation of racial identity operates to destabilize the necessary relationship between experience, understood as the result of perception and sensation, and knowledge constructed by Locke and others during the eighteenth century. If Locke's cognitive model is questioned by Burney, his notion of the self, by contrast, serves as the foundational model for Burney's investigation of the formation of subjectivity in *The Wanderer*. Locke suggested that the localized nature of sensations, experiences, and memories teaches a self how to differentiate itself from another: "Consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes everyone to be, what he calls *self*, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists *personal identity, i.e*. the sameness of a rational Being" (335). While this differential faculty indicates how the self can distinguish itself from others, it also implies that a self possesses a capacity for inward change and transformation. Locke's notion of the conscious, thinking self indicated that identity might be mutable, and profoundly capable

of transformation according to the sensations received. This implication, perhaps never fully acknowledged in Locke's *Essay,* serves as one of the points of departure for Dror Wahrman's historical account of eighteenth-century notions of the self and identity in *The Making of the Modern Self*.[9] Wahrman claims that the eighteenth-century saw what amounted to a revolution in conceptions of the self as identity categories shifted from the outside in, from being conceptualized as an external character gloss to an internal state of being. He traces a change from what he calls the *ancien régime* of identity, more properly a persona characterized by mutability and changefulness, and a modern notion of the self. This modern self functions, by contrast, as an ontologically unchanging, radically interiorized category resulting in a temporally stable identity.[10] Juliet's unstable self, as she transforms from black to white, works against this emerging notion of the essential self which Wahrman suggests was reaching the status of cultural authority at the end of the eighteenth century.

If novels themselves somehow function as embodiments of indirect experience, and if those experiences serve as the objects of thought used to create and change the self, Burney's *The Wanderer*, despite its optimistic preface, is perhaps her most challenging

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[9] Locke's epistemology is emblematic of the transformation in notions of personal identity and the self that Wahrman traces in *The Making of the Modern Self:* "As Locke spins out the consequences of his reflections on personal identity, we find insubstantiality, mutability, and doubleness: precisely those fluid aspects of the *ancien régime* of identity … all wrapped up together in a neat theoretical package" (191).

[10] Wahrman elaborates, "It bears repeating that, *a priori*, there was nothing inevitable about such affinities: the fact that in this particular historical configuration they did occur – a synergy that the masquerade embodied so well – points to a powerful shared epistemological framework that underpinned these patterns. In our pursuit of these common underpinnings, two important characteristics of the *ancient régime* of identity stand out. The first is malleability: the sense that one's 'personal identity' … at least in principle or under certain circumstances, could be imagined as unfixed and potentially changeable – sometimes perceived as double, other times as shreddable, replaceable, moldable. The second … is the absence signaled in the phrase 'before the self': indicating a time that lacked a sense of a stable inner core of selfhood like that which will emerge at the turn of the eighteenth-century" (168).

work of fiction because it questions the extent to which readers are capable of engaging with the transformational impact of the novel, its "lessons of experience" at all. Juliet challenges readers because of her shifting racial identification, but also because her blackness, and her familiarity with French, is closely associated at the beginning of the novel with the Haitian slave revolt. Her blackness thus functions as a crucial reminder to the reader of events which, by and large, had been forgotten in England by 1814, calling for readers to reconsider how these past events continue to shape narratives of British history and ideologies of race and race-relations. The novel, furthermore, meditates on other characters' varied reactions to this association with Haiti in such a way as to explore their challenge to both Juliet's status as a possible witness to revolutionary events in France and the Caribbean, and the value of her stories as "true," as evidenced by the fact that one character, as we will see, calls them "outlandish fibs." Other characters, such as Harleigh and Mr. Giles, become Burney's emblems of an ideal reader within the text and work as a counterpoint to these hostile readers. Mr. Giles and Harleigh, however, are rarely effective in circulating alternative readings of Juliet, demonstrating Burney cynicism about the capacity of testimony to challenge received accounts of the past. The status of Juliet as witness and storyteller, finally, anticipates accounts of the trauma of slavery as depicted in the first black female autobiography, Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave: Related by Herself* (1831). *The Wanderer* and Prince's *History* both explore the ways in which testimony is complicated by its necessary interaction with and mediation through other rhetorical registers. Despite the ways in which Juliet and Mary's stories are distrusted and thus shaped by other readers,

especially hostile readers, they do seem to achieve moments of testimonial authenticity because of their ability to imagine alternative reading communities. For Mary, her account of the earthquake authorizes her testimony to the brutality of slavery and casts God as her ideal reader, whereas for Juliet, her encounter with Stonehenge works to justify her story as it is subsumed within a larger history. Juliet's early identification with Haiti serves, therefore, as a lens through which to examine issues of testimony and historical truth, the continuing impact of slavery, abolition, and slave revolt, and the claims of authentic and mediated narratives on reading communities.

## II

If, as Burney suggests, reading provides readers with "lessons of experience," what precisely are readers supposed to learn from Juliet's unusual self-presentation as a black woman? That she unnerves the other passengers onboard ship is clear. One character, Mr. Ireton, nervously asks her, "What part of the world might you come from? The settlements in the West Indies? or somewhere off the coast of Africa?" (19). His "or somewhere off the coast of Africa" almost certainly indicates his desire that she not answer "from Saint Domingue." Juliet, however, ignores his question[11] – "She drew on her gloves, without seeming to hear him" – precluding any resolution to the tension she has caused since she revealed herself as a francophone black woman (19). Although the

[11] Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, that other great novel of 1814, to some extent also elided representation of the slave trade. In a famous episode, Fanny Price asks her uncle, who has just returned from his plantation in Antigua, about the slave trade, only to be met with "a dead silence" (155). Instead of the silence of the black woman, it is the silence of the slave trader represented in this novel.

slave revolt is Saint Domingue is not explicitly mentioned, *The Wanderer* is set during the early years of the revolt (1791-1804), which serves as a crucial background for the novel. By 1789, Saint Domingue, which occupied the western half of the island of Hispaniola, was France's most prosperous colony, a wealth founded principally through the export of sugar. Provoked by the ideals articulated in "The Rights of Man and Citizen," slaves across the northern plains revolted in August 1791. The conflict continued until black independence was achieved in 1804, due in part to the shrewd political and military acumen of black leaders such as Toussaint L'Ouverture.[12] In crucial ways, Juliet's portrayal of blackness calls attention to the ways structures of knowledge and categories of identity are impacted by political realities. Indeed, Wahrman's choice to call older notions of the self "the *ancien régime* of identity" is not in the interest of engaging in creative word-play. While in blackface, Juliet temporarily represents those without power under what we might call the *ancien régime* of imperialism and colonial power. Readers must then confront the racial assumptions such ideologies entail, as Tara Elizabeth Czechowski argues, "What the passengers project onto her to explain what they do not know … says something about them. On the mere basis of her initial complexion and taciturnity, they affiliate the stranger with theft, beggary, and prostitution. The adhesion of so many offenses to the dark figure of Juliet betrays the deepening

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[12] Deborah Jenson argues that the Haitian slave revolt became a media event, "an epochal eruption of black Atlantic consciousness into the print cultural environment of Euro-American readers" (46). She suggests that L'Ouverture was at the forefront of this recreation of black consciousness in the Atlantic, "It was Toussaint who forged a dialogue of tenuous peer relationship with metropolitan and colonial leadership, and out of it an enduring foothold for critique and mobility" (47). See also Edward Baptist's "Hidden in Plain View: Evasions, Invasions, and Invisible Nations," where he argues that Toussaint has become a protean historical entity who continues to become more enigmatic with time because of his shrewd performance of a public persona in the media.

entrenchment of racialist thought in the bourgeois society Burney depicts" (196-7). When one character encounters the black Juliet for a second time after the ship has landed in England, he demonstrates a profound capacity to ignore Juliet's status as a human subject: "What, is that black insect buzzing about us still?" (27). Juliet's early identification as a francophone black woman therefore would have certainly challenged contemporary readers at all familiar with the upheavals in the Caribbean.

The tension escalates even further when the other characters come to assume that the black stranger not only might have played a role in the revolutionary upheaval in Saint Domingue, but that she also wears proof of that role on her body: "The wind just then blowing back the prominent borders of a French night-cap, which had almost concealed all her features, displayed a large black patch, that covered half her left cheek, and a broad black ribbon, which bound a bandage of cloth over the right side of her forehead" (20). Mr. Ireton belittles the stranger's past by saying, "Why I am afraid the demoiselle has been in the wars! … Why, Mistress, have you been trying your skill at fisty cuffs for the good of your nation? or only playing with kittens for your private diversion?" (20). While Mr. Ireton represents one possibility of response, as readers we might ask ourselves what other responses are possible given Burney's undeniably specific initial representation of Juliet as a refugee from Haiti. What was Burney trying to "teach" her readers through a depiction of this subject? Indeed, why Haiti? Why this insistence on representing through even the most mundane signs – the bandages – the transformation of Haiti?

We might say that Juliet's bandages are suggestive because they serve as material

reminders for the way her history is hidden or covered. Like the way Mr. Ireton imagines wounds beneath the bandages, we imagine multiple possible narratives for the black stranger in the absence of any real depiction of her interior life or revelation of her past history. We may read the continual process of narrative deferral, a deferral which silences and isolates Juliet even as it highlights her unusual position as the only character who possesses knowledge apart from the reader, as an anticipation of the way narratives of Haiti have also been silenced. While studies of Haiti and the slave revolt have increased dramatically in the past ten years, such scholarly interest has not always been the norm, as Jeremy Popkin explains:

> As contemporary interest in the origins of modern ideas about race, slavery, and colonialism has directed new attention to the events of the 1790s in Haiti, it has become almost a cliché to emphasize this 'silencing' of the Haitian Revolution. In his influential collection of essays *Silencing the Past*, the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot argued that the Western world had consistently treated the slave insurrection of 1791 and its results as a 'non-event' that could not be fitted into any intellectual categories and was, therefore, literally 'unthinkable.' (2)

Moira Ferguson argues that this work of silencing began almost immediately: "Once Britain declared war on France in 1793, championing slaves' rights became anathema – especially in the wake of the successful revolution by slaves and freed Africans in San Domingo" (4). Ferguson may over-simplify the absence of abolitionist dissent after the slave revolt began – writers such as Thomas Clarkson, for example, certainly registered

their critiques of the colonial project.[13] However, it does appear that public opinion was more inclined to agree with Albert Willoughby, Earl of Abingdon, whose speech advocating the postponement of any consideration to abolish the slave trade reveals acute unease over the events in Saint Domingue: "Look at the state of the Colony of St. Domingo, and see what Liberty and Equality, see what the Rights of Man, have done there" (9). Given this context, if we take a moment to imagine ourselves among *The Wanderer's* contemporary readers encountering the novel for the first time, we can trace the way Burney gestures towards these effaced narratives through the silence of her heroine. Burney, in a sense, uses the silencing of Haiti to characterize her heroine in important ways in order to explore issues of testimony and memory. If we can recapture that moment when we, as readers, believed Burney's heroine to be truly black, the brief pause before her choice not to satisfy our (or Mr. Ireton's) curiosity serves to spur our own imagination. What might the stranger tell about slavery and the slave trade, about the Caribbean, about the revolt on Saint Domingue? The impact her decision to remain silent about her history becomes a tense choice that resonates throughout the novel. The black stranger's silence exposes the capacity of testimony to effect action, to transform the reader, but it also indicates a recognition that the efficacy of testimonial witness relies on the acceptance and tolerance of the hearer.

We can see this problem particularly in the way other characters debate their treatment of Juliet at the beginning of the novel. Already in the first sentence of the

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[13] Clarkson, in his "The True State of the Case, Respecting the Insurrection at St. Domingo," argues that it is the nature of the slave trade to provoke its own destruction, "For we cannot keep people in a state of subjection to us, who acknowledge no obligation whatever to serve us, but by breaking their spirits and treating them as creatures of another species" (3).

novel, Burney subverts expectations by having her heroine pleading for *English* compassion and liberty – and almost failing to attain it (Jerinic 67). The passengers, sure the poor stranger must be a French spy, nearly sail away. Virtually every major character is present on the ship when Juliet pleads for aid, and nearly every one of them ignores her obvious distress: "Oh listen to my prayers! … Oh leave me not to be massacred!" (11). One old man gruffly counsels the pilot of the vessel, "Be lured by no tricks … Put off immediately, pilot" (11). Only Harleigh and Admiral Powel speak on behalf of the needy stranger. "'Tis the voice of a woman! Where can be the danger? Take her in, pilot, at my demand, and my charge!" says Harleigh, and Admiral Powel patriotically adds, "Since she is but a woman, and in distress, save her, pilot, in God's name! … A woman, a child, and a fallen enemy, are three persons that every true Briton should scorn to misuse" (11-12). The irony of Admiral Powel's speech is that Juliet will find little sympathy in England, evident at the very beginning when Mrs. Maple stiffly pronounces at the stranger's approach, "Mr. Harleigh, I shall be obliged to you if you will change places with me," so that she will not have to stand near the stranger (13). Although Harleigh and Admiral Powel are successful in their combined plea to allow Juliet to come onboard ship, Harleigh is distressed by the other passengers' treatment of the stranger, and says to Elinor, "Nothing so uncontrollably excites resistance than mistreatment of the unoffending" (13). Harleigh, however, does not rebuke the other passengers, and Elinor responds with careless aplomb, "I have no doubt but your tattered dulcinea has secured your protection for the whole voyage, merely because old aunt Maple has been a little ill bred to her" (13). Elinor essentially relegates the kind of sympathetic reading Burney

desires from her characters (and from readers of the novel) to a chivalric archaism, a particularly biting judgment given how Juliet's presence makes concrete the actuality of events in the distant Caribbean.

The problem, of course, is that if Juliet is "unthinkable" because for a brief moment she gestures towards the existence of Haitian slave testimony, it is a representation which ultimately illustrates the difficulty of preserving such narratives. No one but Mr. Ireton asks Juliet for details of "the wars," and Mr. Ireton only asks once – he does not persist. Indeed, we might take Juliet's silence as a metaphor for the historical and epistemological challenge Haitian slave revolt represents, because, as it stands, no such francophone black slave testimony exists. [14] In his analysis of francophone literary depictions of the French Atlantic triangle, Christopher Miller describes the impact this dearth of testimony has on any attempt to write about Haiti:

> In the English-speaking world … the problem of silence is significantly offset by testimonies and narratives, beginning with [Olaudah] Equiano's. But in French the problem is far more serious, for *there are no real slave narratives in French* – not as we know them in the Anglophone Atlantic, not that have yet been discovered. That absence, for now at least, haunts any inquiry into the history of slavery. (34; original emphasis)

More specifically, the overall lack of francophone slave testimony parallels the problem of accounting for Haiti in current historiography given the way Haiti has until recently

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[14] Miller notes that Toussaint L'Ouverture was "the first of the black memorialists in French, but his memoirs are concerned with his actions as a general; they contain no recollections of Toussaint's life as a slave, so they are not a slave narrative as such" (34).

been virtually ignored in scholarly accounts of the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century.[15] Jeremy Popkin has tried to intervene with a recent collection of first-person accounts of the slave revolt, *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection* (2007). Such a collection, however, necessarily had to rely on the perspectives of white authors, one of which, viscerally illustrating Trouillot's "unthinkability" thesis, asked his black captors, "What did I do to make you want to kill me?" ("La Révolution de Saint-Domingue," 51). Popkin, furthermore, admits that scholars face a profound problem when reconstructing a picture of the Haitian slave revolt based solely on such accounts: "The ethical responsibility imposed on readers of survivor narratives is, then, the difficult one of reading such texts with a sense of their context and with a willingness to explicitly recognize the moral complexities they embody" (33). Popkin's collection illustrates the profound difficulty of maintaining critical distance when encountering first-person accounts because these testimonies claim lived experience as the foundation for their truth-value.

In *The Wanderer,* Burney addresses appeals to experience as a way of knowing the "truth" about a past event in a moment of characteristically comic skepticism. Juliet finds herself within a circle of lower-middle class farmers and tradesmen for whom the "truth" of the French Revolution and the upheavals in the Caribbean are events hardly capable of imagining – in a sense, "unthinkable." Young Gooch, the son of a farmer, displays a child-like fascination for Juliet's story, only the outlines of which are known, and he believes she represents all the evidence he needs to verify the many dramatic stories

[15] An exception is C.L.R. James's seminal 1938 work on the slave revolt, *The Black Jacobins.*

circulating around him about the Revolution, many of which his father emphatically disbelieves. Young Gooch, however, argues to his father that some of the stories from across the Channel *must* be true, for Juliet has experienced them, and thus can bear witness to their truth-value: "'You would not believe a word about all those battles, and guiliotines, and the like, of Mounseer Robert Speer, in foreign parts; though I told you, over and over, that I had it from our club? Well! here's a person now here, in your own grounds, that's seen it all with her own eyes! So if you don't believe it now, I'll bet what wager you will, you'll never believe it as long as you live'" (465). Young Gooch's father comically persists in questioning the testimony of even a witness who has "seen it all with her own eyes" because the events she testifies to are, to his mind, patently improbable, demonstrating his conviction that the boundary between fiction and testimony is difficult to separate:

> 'I do not much give my mind to believing all them outlandish fibs, told by travelers … But, bless my heart! for a man to come for to pretend telling me, because it be a great ways off, and I can't find un out, that there be a place where there comes a man, who says, every morning of his life, to as many of his fellow-creatures as a can set eyes on, whether they be man, woman, or baby; here, mount me two or three dozen of you into that cart, and go have your heads chopt off! And that they'll make no more ado, than go, only because they're bid! Why if one will believe such staring stuff as that be, one may as well believe that the moon be made of cream-cheese, and the like. There's no sense in such a set of lies, for life's life every where, even in France.' (465-6)

Farmer Gooch's skepticism illustrates what Leigh Gilmore described in *Autobiographics* as the way in which first-person accounts are necessarily constricted by what a culture defines as "true:" "The 'innocence' of autobiography as a naïve attempt to tell a universal truth is radically particularized by a specific culture's notion of what truth is, who may tell it, and who is authorized to judge it" (107). This moment with Farmer Gooch works at multiple levels to illustrate what Gilmore suggests what makes the creation of autobiographical texts so complicated. Burney uses Farmer Gooch's incredulous foolishness to mock a sensibility which denies the credibility of *both* first-person testimony and journalistic accounts circulating in public spaces (Young Gooch's "I had it from our club") which appear improbable. Through the voice of Farmer Gooch, however, Burney also registers her acknowledgment that the construction and reception of a "true" testimony depends on readers and listeners like Farmer Gooch. He helps compose the cultural hegemony which authorizes "what truth is, who may tell it, and who is authorized to judge it" (Gilmore 107). He, unfortunately, also forms part of the social context through which Juliet tries to form a stable subjectivity. If we imagine, as Paul Ricoeur suggest, that a "self perceives itself as another among others," then the presence of hostile or skeptical spectators like Farmer Gooch make it difficult for her not only to imagine herself as a self, but to imagine how that self can be properly assimilated into British culture (192). Juliet, as we will see, in some sense, tries to remove herself from the culture of readers which produced Farmer Gooch and others like him in order to find

a way to assimilate her self-presentation within an alternative history of subjectivity.

## III

Perhaps because of the presence of lazy or skeptical listeners, such as Mr. Ireton and Farmer Gooch, Juliet's own self-narration in *The Wanderer* is remarkably scarce. We are allowed very few opportunities to access the stranger's inward life, thoughts, or feelings. In truth, even her past history, which in some ways is a very different kind of knowledge than access to her interior life, is provided in bits and pieces. We only learn her first name, Juliet, after a wait of hundreds of pages, and the novel continues for another several hundred pages before we discover a last name or family history. Her story more often comes from others or is imposed upon her by an outside observer. In this way, the story of "her self" is not so much one of discovering how she represents a given identity, but of how her subjectivity is framed by the imagination (or lack of imagination) of her given audience. A case in point would be that although Juliet enters the story in blackface and is closely identified with the recent slave revolt in Haiti, she herself rarely thematizes her story as a slave narrative. She instead, as we have seen, suggests the presence of living testimonies to wider black experience in the Caribbean. She does not name herself as slave or even structure her story as a metaphorical slave testimony, in part perhaps because Juliet knows the difference between being a commodity and being treated as one.

Other characters respond in fairly constricted ways to Juliet's blackness, and repeat the same explanations of her disguise and silence to each other throughout the novel.

When confronted by Juliet's mysterious past but painfully evident poverty, many characters are more than willing to deal with her "unthinkability" by continuing to name her as slave even when she has been revealed as white. The ways in which other characters frame her story as a slave narrative becomes complicated quickly, however, because they either impose a class status by referring to her as a poor white slave or attempt to absorb her story within a history of British white feminism, where women named themselves slaves to highlight the real material conditions which hampered female independence and freedom of movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – in the process ignoring present black histories in the Caribbean. Burney's investigation of this feminist rhetorical move, or Kimberly Lutz calls the "woman-as-slave" metaphor, in *The Wanderer* becomes all the more challenging because of how this metaphor functioned in early white feminist texts. For instance, one early example of this metaphor is in Judith Drake's *Essay in Defense of the Female Sex* (1696), where Drake deliberately invokes slavery to imagine female experience in England: "Women, like our Negroes in our Western Plantations, are born slaves, and live Prisoners all their Lives" (31). Of course, Drake's use of the possessive "our" to refer to black African slaves reveals that white women, although "like" slaves, may still participate – at least in the imagination – in the possession of black bodies, a rhetorical slip paralleled by other characters in *The Wanderer*.[16]

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[16] Felicity Nussbaum in *Torrid Zones: Maternity, Sexuality, and Empire in Eighteenth-Century Narratives* develops the complex relationship between gender and race depicted in *The Wanderer*. She reminds us, "Empire afforded a convenient metaphor for feminism in that is variously conceptualized domestic sovereignty and tyranny. 'Empire,' like 'slavery,' gained primacy in early feminist descriptions of women's exploitation, and there is considerable slippage among a least three definitions: the actual British empire, men's empire or dominion over women, and women's empire of love. Domesticating empire to make it

Elinor, Juliet's theatrical, rebellious, occasional friend, most often appropriates the woman-as-slave metaphor not in order to "explain" Juliet but to represent what she perceives is her own constricted position in England. Elinor certainly has some of the most vivid and memorable lines critiquing the female condition in *The Wanderer.* Elinor is particularly astute in pinpointing cultural structures of oppression which perpetuate the limits set on female self-determination and -representation. She tells Juliet:

> By the oppression of their own statutes and institutions, they render us insignificant; and then speak of us as if we were so born! But what have we tried, in which we have been foiled? They dare not trust us with their own education, and their own opportunities for distinction … Woman is left out in the scales of human merit, only because they dare not weigh her! (399)

Lutz suggests that while Juliet visually represents the metaphor, Elinor gives voice to her oppression, a reiteration of Julia Epstein's contention that "Elinor … can be read as speaking for [Juliet] and expressing her resentment" (188). As readers, we can see this close relationship between the two characters when Juliet in desperation takes a job as a companion to the splenetic Mrs. Ireton, Elinor wonders why Juliet would choose "submit to such slavery." Elinor also predicts that Juliet's employment will degenerate into an incarceration defined by "bolts, bars, dungeons, towers, and bastilles," closely associating colonial slavery with recent events in France, and the destruction of the Bastille (474, 475). Given Elinor's shrewd understanding that the gender divisions in British culture are

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seem to be only a metaphor (as did many early women writers ') trivializes the material reality that emerged in the colonies of the Americas, and extended beyond Africa, India, and the South Pacific" (14-15).

constructed, however, she surprisingly passes perhaps the harshest judgment on Juliet's use of blackface, indicating that Juliet, to some extent, remains "unthinkable" even within a culture willing to read slavery and women's condition as analogous positions. Elinor says to Harleigh (in front of Juliet): "Oh, Harleigh! how is it you thus can love all you were wont to scorn? double dealing, false appearances, and lurking disguise! without a family she dare claim, without a story she dare tell, without a name she dare avow!" (181).

Elinor's inability to see the way Juliet's position parallels her own illustrates how difficult a project it might be for some to separate the interpretive work of the woman-as-slave metaphor from an emerging tradition of black slave narrative. Indeed, it is historically significant that the first black female Anglophone testimony only appears over a decade *after* Burney's novel with Mary Prince's *History*. Burney's *The Wanderer* presents something of a historical anomaly, however. Burney published the novel in 1814, ten years after the end of the Haitian slave revolt in 1804 and abolition of the slave trade in Britain in 1807, but well before the abolition of slavery in 1833. In perhaps Juliet's only direct reference to slavery and abolition, she imagines her rescue from her marriage to the brutal French commissioner she spends most of the novel attempting to escape as "the abolition of my shackles" (862). Juliet's one oblique reference to slavery, when read in conjunction with Elinor's more flamboyant language, suggests that Burney was perhaps more concerned with tracing black subjects as they were read by British observers in highly restricted ways, rather than taking slavery more directly as her narrative subject, as Tara Czechowski also argues:

> Burney disconnects racial blackness from the looming stereotype of criminality by placing a white heroine into the same sort of nameless, expatriated and poverty-stricken condition as the black poor with similar results; she too is suspected, exhibited, observed and ultimately pursued as a criminal. While Burney's narrator often attributes Juliet's vulnerability to her being female, the fact of her femininity is not the sole source of these difficulties. The novel suggests that Juliet's suffering proceeds equally from the anxious efforts of the upper echelons of society to ensure their superior status by positing a race of unnamed and unnameable wanderers. (214)

*The Wanderer'*s intense preoccupation with Juliet's treatment when both black and white suggests that few material gains had been achieved (despite the efforts of the abolition movement) if Juliet can still be treated as a black criminal. By publishing *The Wanderer* during what we might call a "quiet period" between Haitian independence and the abolition of slavery, Burney seems more concerned with the challenge of accepting black experience as a category which could claim testimonial authority, rather than staking an ideological position on slavery. Indeed, Burney seems more concerned with asking, "And after abolition, what?" Abolition will have made few real gains if freed slaves are merely re-integrated into a "race of unnamed and unnameable wanderers," along with the indigent white poor, rather than treated as subjects capable of creating meaningful life narratives.

We can see this concern perhaps most clearly in the way Mr. Giles's defense of Juliet's status as a human subject is received by her employer, Mrs. Ireton. In *The*

*Wanderer*, only Mr. Giles seems to possess the sympathetic imagination necessary to perceive the cost of oppression in whatever form it manifests. He tells Mrs. Ireton that in treating Juliet the way she does while under her employ, she is guilty of creating a "toad-eater," or "a person who would swallow any thing, bad or good; and do whatever he was bid, right or wrong; for the sake of a little pay" (520). Mrs. Ireton predictably protests, "I thought, on the contrary, I had engaged a young person, who would never think of taking a liberty as to give her opinion; but who would do, as she ought, with respect and submission, whatever I should indicate" (524). In response, Mr. Giles redefines Juliet's status as "toad-eater" to that of "slave."

> Why that would be leading the life of a slave! And that, I supposed, is what they meant, all this time, by a toad-eater. However, don't look so ashamed, my pretty dear, for a toad-eater-maker is still worse! … What can rich people be thinking of, to lay out their money in buying their fellow-creatures' liberty of speech and thought! (524)

If anyone can be said to come close to understanding the narrative possibilities available to Juliet, and be able to "speak … her resentment," it is Mr. Giles and not Elinor Joddrel. Mr. Giles's egalitarianism conceivably spans to include all oppressed groups. He says, "Nobody is born to be trampled upon," and his words include more than just the white European women represented in the woman-as-slave metaphor Lutz invokes (522). Throughout the novel, Mr. Giles's concern for the indigent resituates Juliet's disguises and her degrading employments along a spectrum of deeply repressed wrongs committed by the haves who wish to forcefully erase the have-nots from memory and history. Mr.

Giles pointedly calls for his listeners to remember, and in so doing, pushes those repressed memories to the surface of polite society. As we saw with Harleigh, Mr. Giles, perhaps because he is a kindly, naïve old man, is an ineffective force in the world of the novel. His rebuke to Mrs. Ireton and support for Juliet effect few real gains. He may call for a kind of sympathy which can imaginatively inhabit the position of another – become a "lesson of experience," in other words – but his words do not result, by and large, in more tolerant, sympathetic listeners.

The way that Elinor and Mrs. Ireton impact the way Juliet's story is known, imagined, and evaluated parallels the way some early slave testimonies were mediated and verified as "true." Mary Prince's *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave: Related by Herself* (1831) is a case in point. Mary Prince was born in Bermuda around 1788. Her *History* is narrated as a "gradual descent into evil," and as Prince is sold and re-sold to private owners, each successor depicted as more immoral than the previous (Whitlock 11). While Prince's *History* occupies a unique position in the canon as the first British black autobiography, the text mediates a complicated array of authorial and editorial voices, as Gillian Whitlock has shown.[17] Whitlock has paid close attention to the ways that Prince's narrative was mediated and authorized by both her early editor, Thomas Pringle, and her amanuensis, Susanna Strickland, as she explains, "Prince and Strickland … enable the production of the text, the presentation of an autobiographical

[17] Whitlock focuses on what she calls the "marginalia" of the text – Thomas Pringle's preface and extensive inclusion of supporting documents after the *History*, and Susanna Strickland's position as amanuensis – in her work on gender, race, and autobiography, *The Intimate Empire*: "It is through the marginalia that we can come to read the *History* not only in terms of its referential context, its place as a document in the history of slavery and what it tells us from a subjective point of view, but also the narrative relationship and the reading context which impinge upon the text" (13).

subject 'Mary Prince'" (17). [18] Both editor and amanuensis had differing agendas in inscribing and publishing Prince's autobiography, according to Whitlock. Pringle was heavily invested in the abolition movement and wished to use Prince's text to depict the cruelty of slavery, while Strickland ensures that the *History* negotiates the standards of domesticity and purity: "Prince's amanuensis and editor do not set out to record her experience [because] … a public presentation of self as virtuous, docile, and domesticated is mandatory for her to speak with cultural authority … But the conditions which Mary Prince describes in her *History* are hardly conducive to purity and domesticity" (21). Whitlock's conclusion gets to the heart of one of the problems explored in such detail by Burney in *The Wanderer,* "The gap between 'experience' and 'telling the truth' in this case are considerable" (21). Burney justifies the work of the novel by claiming that reading fiction can transfer the "lessons of experience" to the reader, but, as we saw in the case of Farmer Gooch's skepticism, the "true" testimony inscribed within these fictional worlds must approach a level of probability to achieve that transference. Juliet can tell the truth, but if that truth fails measure up to a standard of probability, her testimony may achieve nothing.

At important moments in the *History,* Prince's own agency appears to clearly resonate against the careful editorial moves of Pringle, however. Prince, for instance,

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[18] As Whitlock explains, "Her narrative was subjected to intense and public scrutiny, and republished several times in that first year of publication. Its legitimacy was challenged by the pro-slavery lobby while her character was defended by Pringle and the campaigners for emancipation. This struggle for authority and veracity was played out in the English courts in 1833, the same year the Emancipation Bill came into effect. My interest … is the struggle to authorize Mary Prince as an autobiographical subject in the *History* itself. For this first autobiography by a British black woman is not only eloquent testimony to the inhumanity of slavery, it is also a record of how an unlikely autobiographer can gain access to the British public in 1831" (12).

desires a certain sympathetic response from her readers, but recognizes that her experiences are fundamentally "other" to their experiences, and thus lack an experiential transferability:

> Oh dear! I cannot bear to think of that day [when she was sold and left her mother], -- it is too much. – It recalls the great grief that filled my heart, and the woeful thoughts that passed to and fro through my mind, whilst listening to the pitiful words of my poor mother, weeping for the loss of her children. I wish I could find words to tell you all I then felt and suffered. The great God above alone knows the thoughts of the poor slave's heart, and the bitter pains which follow such separations as these. (241)

Prince instead casts God as the ideal reader, the only one capable of knowing and identifying with her experience as a slave. Her words assumed that some experiences are, in a sense, unable to be transferred, which casts doubt on the capacity of testimony to create an authentic transfer of experience from author to reader, or to human readers at least. Some traumas are beyond the power of narrative to convey.

To counteract the challenge of relating an experience which she defines as somehow essentially beyond the capacity of narrative, Prince situates one incident of her life within a larger network of similar stories, meaning that her story is supported by the authority of other narratives. The collective weight of these stories, furthermore, are supported and justified even by natural phenomena. Prince relates an incident where she cracked and broke some earthen jars and was severely beaten for the offense. Immediately following her whipping, however, "There was a dreadful earthquake. Part of the roof fell down, and

everything in the house went – clatter, clatter, clatter. Oh I thought the end of all things near at hand" (247). Although Prince does not claim that God sent the earthquake as any kind of direct response to her beating, its juxtaposition in the narrative with a scene of unjust punishment speaks to the kind of historical scope Prince's account seeks to address. Prince does not particularize the earthquake perhaps because she wishes for readers to interpret it in wider terms as a revolt of the natural world against an institution she reads as fundamentally unnatural. In the same way, she wishes readers to read her story in some sense as a representative: "In telling my own sorrows, I cannot pass by those of my fellow-slaves – for when I think of my own griefs, I remember theirs" (251). Mary casts herself as a keeper of memory, and she relates the ways her story as an act of bearing witness constitutes an experience that tests the limits of representation. In this way, we might say that Prince's *History* engages in a kind of construction of identity that is not constituted, as Philip Gardner explains, merely out of

> the full potential of individual memory. If memory is closely attuned to the requirements of narrative, it can also be exercised in other ways which reach beyond and between identity narratives and which may therefore be focused upon different categories of historical questioning, particularly those centered upon remembering as the act of bearing witness. (108)

If *The Wanderer* is itself concerned with framing subjectivity in similar terms, we can place Prince's *History* and Burney's novel, despite their generic differences, within an emerging tradition that speak to narrating peripheral subjectivities.

*The Wanderer* gestures towards such a tradition when Juliet visits Stonehenge near

the end of the novel. While there, Juliet confronts a human structure situated in history, but also, in a sense, outside of history, since knowledge of what the structure supposedly represents has been lost. Juliet describes Stonehenge at first in terms that explicitly contrast it with the upper class society she encountered in other parts of the novel, in this case, Wilton Manor:

> In a state of mind so utterly deplorable as that of Juliet, this grand, uncouth monument of ancient days had a certain sad, indefinable attraction, more congenial to her distress, than all the polish, taste, and delicacy of modern skill. The beauties of Wilton seemed appendages of luxury, as well as of refinement; and appeared to require not only sentiment, but happiness for their complete enjoyment: while the nearly savage, however wonderful work of antiquity, in which she was now rambling; placed in this abandoned spot, far from the intercourse, or even view of mankind, with no prospect but of heath and sky; blunted, for the moment, her sensibility, by removing her wide from all the objects with which it was in contact; and insensibly calmed her spirits; though not by dissipating her reverie (765-6).

Given the novel's complicated depiction of blackness and race, the use of "savage" as a descriptor has particular resonance. Use rarely by Burney in the novel, "savage" seems to operate as the key term which provokes the mental state Burney depicts for Juliet.[19] What makes the monument "savage," however seems to be its lack of aesthetic sophistication and refinement, which for Juliet evokes memories of the kind of deeply hypocritical,

[19] The other use of "savage" as a description occurs when Juliet's cruel French husband screams in "savage joy" at discovering "proof" that Juliet's French guardian's is a traitor.

intensely shallow society she faced at Wilton Manor, rather than some essential, present cultural marker of barbarity. The monument's isolated position outside the boundaries of "culture" gives Juliet the freedom to separate herself, at least for a moment, from the weight of the totalizing, homogenizing notions of the self, which are profoundly nationalist and racist. In other words, the "savage" monument here functions as an avenue for accessing an authentic account of human history prior to the development of artificial structures of behavior and thought which gird social relationships.

However, in one of the few places where we, as readers, glimpse any interior life for Juliet, Burney takes care to emphasize the impenetrability of that interiority. Burney accomplishes this through her carefully balanced descriptions of Juliet's separation from both local spaces and feelings, but she still hints that Juliet's consciousness is not completely separated from the landscape – it is merely focused on a singular object and is engaged in a kind of dream-like contemplation of that object – what Burney calls a "reverie." Her contemplation of Stonehenge is an action, however, which has the potential to propel Juliet into madness, suggested to her by Iago's lines in *Othello*[20]: "Here … was room for 'meditation even to madness'; nothing distracted the sight, nothing broke in upon attention, nor varied the ideas. Thought, uninterrupted and uncontrolled, was master of the mind" (766). Burney again utilizes a term that structures the narrative along a spectrum of hierarchy which recalls the racial upheavals the novel carefully alludes to. Juliet's thoughts, provoked by the "savage," and yet profoundly authentic monument encourages what we might call a kind of political coup in her own

[20] "Practice upon his peace and quiet, / Even to madness" (II.i.305-6).

cognitive processes. Her contemplation traces the boundary between freedom and madness. Juliet can remove herself from the artificial social hierarchies of Wilton, and engage in a dream of personal, authentic acts of contemplation and interpretation which foster free subjectivities. The possibility of this kind of contemplation to result in radical breaks from a community, history, and local environment has the potential to efface the self in the chaos of madness.

If these reveries can remain sane, Margaret Anne Doody suggests that Stonehenge, through its cultivating of unformed contemplation, works to authorize individual female narratives within a network of stories of pain and struggle. These narratives are, in a sense, authorized because they remain, along with Stonehenge, apart from the hierarchies of interpretation Juliet has encountered: "History is the constant story of the nameless 'I' in the unintelligible world, whose form, like that of mysterious Stonehenge, 'might still be traced' but whose meaning and true name can never be known" (368). These narratives of a life and a self are also authorized because they remain in a sense beyond interpretation and accessibility, a concern for Burney given the weaknesses of the interpretive community she depicts in Farmer Gooch, Mrs. Ireton, Mr. Ireton, Wilton Manor, and even Harleigh and Mr. Giles. Ultimately, at this moment in the novel Burney complicates the argument she set out to make in her preface: that some "lessons of experience" can be transferred to the reader. We see at Stonehenge, for instance, that in order to render an authentic, free narrative of the self, Juliet has to remove herself completely from the community of hostile or weak readers and spectators she had encountered over and over again in the novel. The radically isolated mental state Burney

describes for Juliet, however, is in some ways accessible to the reader of the novel, but because it walks the line between sanity and madness we only catch glimpses of her free subjectivity, because as soon as we attempt interpretation of it, we impose our own reading of Juliet's self, and in a sense become part of the community of readers she is for a moment finally separated from.

## IV

Given *The Wanderer*'s close, if understudied,[21] meditations on issues of race and colonialism, our instinct as modern, ethical readers of the novel might be to imagine that the novel works as a kind of ideological critique: Juliet's disguise, and the other characters almost uniformly hostile reactions to her blackness, pointedly unmask the trauma of the colonial project. As Srinivas Aravamudan suggests in *Tropicopolitans*, however, instead of attempting to definitively identify Burney's own position regarding slavery from *The Wanderer*, we might rather address how the novel alludes to, incorporates, and questions the generic practices of eighteenth-century literature relating to the colonial project by subverting readers' expectations that the stranger's story is one

[21] Very few writers have taken up the problem of *The Wanderer*'s representation of blackness and race. Sara Salih published one of the first articles examining blackness in *The Wanderer*. She argued, however, that Burney really did not address race as a problem at all, but used the representation of what she called "negrophobia" to slip the real object of her satire, which she identified as francophobia, past her readers' attention. Kimberly Lutz, in a dissertation completed the next year, contended that *The Wanderer* participated in an eighteenth-century tradition of early feminist writing which appropriated the image of colonial slavery to describe the plight of the Englishwoman, who lived in virtual slavery. Lutz's argument will be considered in more detail later in this paper. Finally, Tara Elizabeth Czechowski in a recent dissertation examined the association of blackness with crime in eighteenth-century writing. She argues that Juliet's early representation as black taints most of the characters ensuing attempts to make sense of her, even after Juliet is revealed to be white.

which ought to be told: "Rather than use ethical criticism as a form of social therapy, where reading anachronistically leads to rhetorics of condemnation and celebration concerning the political values of texts or the attitudes expressed by their authors, we should identify the institutions and reading practices that determine these shifts in value" (14-5). Within this reading community, Juliet represents memory, particularly those forgotten or effaced memories of the upheaval in Saint Domingue. Juliet's association with Haiti brings us to a larger question than our previous one of how characters in the novel react or should react to the memories Juliet represents. Why was it important to remind readers of Saint Domingue in 1814? By recalling Haiti, *The Wanderer* asks its readers to reconsider how Haiti, and especially testimony about Haiti, intersects with their own pasts. Paul Connerton suggests that giving accounts, or testimony, function at this level to imagine connections between individual and communal pasts:

> We all come to know each other by asking for accounts, by giving accounts, by believing or disbelieving stories about each other's pasts or identities … The narrative of one life is part of an interconnection set of narratives; it is imbedded in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity. (21)

Juliet's experience, even the experiences others imagine for her when her blackness appears real, asks for recognition within British accounts of the past, perhaps becoming the "lesson of experience" *The Wanderer* asks its readers to consider.

# CHAPTER II

Rehearsing Imoinda: Bleaching Black Bodies in *Oroonoko* and *The Wanderer*

> "Paul Valery wrote, 'Our memory repeats to us what we haven't understood.' That's almost it. Say instead: 'Our memory repeats to us what we haven't yet come to terms with, with what still haunts us.'"[22]

## I

Frances Burney's heroine in *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* tests the limits of female self-fashioning. Forced by circumstance to conceal her identity, including her name, Juliet Granville (known through most of the novel under her assumed name of Miss Ellis) is both constricted and defined by the personas she assumes. One of these roles – her forced performance in a private theatrical as *The Provok'd Husband'*s Lady Townly – unavoidably brings her before the notice of general Brighthelmstone society. Although Juliet desperately tries to remain anonymous, her virtuosic performance makes one young lady in particular "nearly extatic" to meet her. As Burney narrates, Lady Barbara Franklin (who, significantly, did not actually see the play) "was wild to see the celebrated Lady Townly" based solely on descriptions of Ellis's acting skill. Burney takes care to assure us that though Barbara "was not quite simple, not quite young enough, to believe that she should literally behold that personage" she was still "unconsciously, so bewildered, between the representation of nature and life, or nature

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[22] Kai Erikson. "Notes on Trauma and Community." *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995. 184.

and life themselves, that she had a certain undefined pleasure in the meeting which perplexed, yet bewitched her imagination" (229). By describing Barbara's somewhat naïve enthusiasm for the perceived glamour of Juliet's theatrical presence, Burney represents the tendency of characters in *The Wanderer* to associate performer and performance. Though we may smile at Lady Barbara's "nearly extatic" anticipation of meeting the celebrated "Lady Townly," Burney's portrayal of the effect Juliet's performance in *The Provok'd Husband* has on the community becomes much more problematic when seen in the context of Juliet's troubling – because convincing – entrance in the novel disguised in blackface.[23]

Reacting to Juliet's performances as a black woman, as an aristocratic lady in *The Provok'd Husband,* and as the unassuming Miss Ellis, Mrs. Maple, who grudgingly provides Juliet shelter early in the novel, feels called to pass the following judgment on Juliet's character: "I was all along sure she was an adventurer and an imposter; with her blacks, and her whites, and her double face!" (251). Lady Barbara and Mrs. Maple's conflicted reactions, both to Juliet's real identity and to her performances, illustrate Dror Wahrman's contention that the end of the eighteenth century constituted an unstable arena for British conceptions of selfhood. He describes the period as one which saw the movement of the locus of the self from the outside in. Earlier eighteenth century notions of identity based on mutability and masquerade transformed into more modern

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[23] For discussions of performance and theater more generally in *The Wanderer*, see Francesca Saggini's "Miss Ellis and The Actress: For a Theatrical Reading of *The Wanderer*," in *A Celebration of Frances Burney*, Sara Salih's "*Camilla* and *The Wanderer*" in the *Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, Catherine Craft-Fairchild's *Masquerade and Gender: Disguise and Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, and Kathleen Anderson's "Frances Burney's *The Wanderer:* The Actress as Virtuous Deceiver" in the *European Romantic Review.*

understandings that the self remains essential, fixed, and somehow separate from identities assumed during performance which can be read by spectators.[24] In similar ways, Juliet's blackface disguise demonstrates that Wahrman's story of the modern self also encompasses changing notions of race. He suggests, "From the 1770s onward …. race was gradually and haltingly reconceptualized as an essential and immutable category, stamped on the individual" (127). However, *The Wanderer,* published in the nineteenth century, perhaps complicates the arc of Wahrman's story about the changing self. We might say that Juliet inhabits a no man's land, or elusive third category, between the two notions of the self so skillfully rendered by Wahrman, because most characters in *The Wanderer,* like Lady Barbara and Mrs. Maple, never completely separate performer from performance, and read Juliet's different identities as sometimes staged, sometimes essential. She becomes for them an uneasy object lesson demonstrating that the revelation of a self might be more a more dynamic project than characters anticipate, especially in times of historical rupture (hence the novel's dwelling on the French Revolution, and its allusion, as we saw in chapter one, to Haiti). Yet others continue to treat Juliet's self-presentations as external clues demonstrating features "stamped indelibly" on her person and indicating something central about her mysterious, if fixed, interior self (Wahrman 128). Unlike Lady Barbara's transparently positive response to Juliet's Lady Townly, other characters' nearly univocal reactions to Juliet as a black woman emphasize her

[24] He suggests that by the end of the century it "became much harder for people to imagine identities as mutable, assumable, divisible, or actively malleable … Nothing illustrated the difficulty in imagining all these better than the rapidly narrowing range of reactions with which contemporaries … greeted such possibilities: impatience, irritation, incomprehension, dismissiveness, incredulity, laughter, and disgust" (275). Such responses correspond to the reactions generated by Juliet's disguises in the insular world of England.

essential racial difference. More significantly, their interpretations of Juliet's selfhood rarely change even when reintroduced to Juliet as a white woman who donned blackface for pragmatic purposes – to escape the anarchy of revolutionary France under the "dire reign of the terrific Robespierre" (11). Their responses indicate both the extent to which racial prejudice had seeped into British society, but also the confusion generated by believing Juliet *is* who she pretends to be.[25]

Critics of *The Wanderer*, when they do address blackness and blackface in the novel[26], often deviate from focusing on the cultural impact of Juliet's blackface as a performance event and racial practice, choosing instead to relate the critical importance of Juliet's performance to other discrete, bodiless texts. This entails a theoretical approach which focuses on the rhetorical points of convergence between Juliet's blackface with more openly ideologically laden genres such as political treatise and satire (which are all, admittedly, rhetorical registers in which Burney excels). Kimberly Lutz and Sara Salih, for instance, both argue that Juliet's blackface gestures metonymically to these other kinds of discursive modes. Lutz, as we saw in chapter one, contends that for

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[25] The extent to which we could consider British society racist at the end of the eighteenth century has been the source of research and debate the past few decades. Certainly eighteenth-century understandings of race differed from Victorian scientific racism. Representing a certain amount of scholarly consensus, Roxann Wheeler suggests, "The assurance that skin color was the primary signifier of human difference was not a dominant conception until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and even then individuals responded variously to nonwhite skin color" (7).

[26] Most critics have noted the uniqueness of *The Wanderer*'s presentation of blackened heroine, but rarely with anything approaching sustained commentary. Sara Salih's seminal 1999 article, "'Her Blacks, Her Whites, Her Double Face!': Altering Alterity in *The Wanderer*," inaugurated current interest in the subject, while research continues primarily in dissertations, theses and conference papers. Judy Ann Olsen's 1992 dissertation, for instance, addresses blackness in *The Wanderer* in the context of wider structures of power oppressing the heroine. Kimberly Lutz's 2000 dissertation discusses *The Wanderer* alongside Victorian uses of blackface in novels by Charles Kingsley and Wilkie Collins. Tara Elizabeth Czechowski's, in a brilliant 2009 dissertation, moves more deeply into the subject of race and blackface in the novel, arguing that Juliet's brief assumption of blackness continually haunts her, as other characters persists in associating her with black poverty and crime.

Burney blackness parallels the position of white females in patriarchal England. Connecting the rhetorical impact of Juliet's visual blackface to early feminist writings, and what she calls the "woman as slave" metaphor, Lutz believes Juliet's black skin recalls white feminist liberty narratives. Salih, on the other hand, argues the novel functions as a satire of British society, and that Burney disguises the real target of her satire, which she identifies as francophobia, with negrophobia, going so far as to call Juliet's initial disguise as a black woman a "red herring" (309). While political treatise and satire both inspire and potentially enrich readings of Juliet's blackface, we should redirect our focus to more theatrically based registers of cultural practice. To do this, we ought to take the characters' crucial initial belief in Juliet's performance as our starting point. Juliet's self is constructed by externally imposed responses to her performance, meaning that she does not "perform" blackness in the sense that her representation is somehow essentially hollow or "evacuated," to borrow a metaphor of Judith Butler's (xv). We will see that Juliet's brief representation as a black woman does indeed mark her community in ways a performance empty of meaning by itself would not provoke.[27] I would also argue that the significance of Juliet's blackface performance does not fully correspond to the generic conventions Lutz and Salih identify – a visual representation of either the subversive woman-as-slave metaphor or conservative francophobia – or that it necessarily parallels discursive debates prevalent in a Britain attempting to rhetorically contain revolutionary discourse across gender, race, and class lines.

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[27] I am drawing on J.L. Austin's notion of the instrumental purpose of performance as working through "performatives," or statements which effect action, as a useful entry point for discussing the way Juliet's performance impacts and changes the community which perceives it.

Rather, I think we should address Juliet's blackface performance as the embodiment or re-presentation of those consigned to the margins of memory in British society, including black women. Juliet's near silent performance as a black woman pushes the boundaries of disguise in the novel because it illustrates, as Butler reminds us, that "the anticipation of [an] … essence produces that which it posits as outside itself" (xv). In the world of *The Wanderer*, Juliet is read as black by performing in blackface – she becomes by doing – and continues to be associated with blackness throughout the course of the novel. We will see that Juliet's performance very quickly moves beyond the realm of red herrings and metaphors, and instead performs – and thus makes present – the difficulty of remembering the forgotten in British culture, particularly if we define culture in Joseph Roach's terms as "the social processes of memory and forgetting" (xi). In so doing, *The Wanderer* participates in surrogating, what Roach describes as a process which "reproduces and re-creates" communal practice, a specific performance event in the eighteenth century (2). Juliet's performance rehearses the dramatic bleaching of another heroine, Imoinda, from Aphra Behn's novella of 1688 to Thomas Southerne's staged adaptation a decade later. By calling attention to the similarity between Behn and Southerne's representation of Imoinda and Burney's portrayal of Juliet, we may better situate *The Wanderer* as a colonial text concerned with performing and possessing the black female body.

## II

Appropriated by contemporaries for diverse and perhaps contradictory ends, and situated by critics within a complicated set of rhetorics, *Oroonoko* and *The Wanderer* as

colonial texts have come in for their fair share of contextual debates. Throughout the eighteenth century, contemporaries used *Oroonoko*, especially the more popularly known stage version, to speak to their own anxieties about rhetorics of authenticity, often localized in debates about the sincerity and authority of identity, performance, and the colonial project. Behn's original narrative participates in the complicated communal project of surrogation detailed by Joseph Roach in *Cities of the Dead*. As others create their own versions of Oroonoko and Imoinda, they elicit anxiety about the authenticity of these reproductions. The re-performed Imoinda, in particular, incites reactions all along the spectrum described by Roach: "The very uncanniness of the process of surrogation, which tends to disturb the complacency of all thoughtful incumbents, may provoke many unbidden emotions, ranging from mildly incontinent sentimentalism to raging paranoia" (2). The representation of Imoinda as a colonial other often served to critique the authenticity of peculiarly British cultural mores.

Continuously performed on British stages either in Southerne or others' adaptations, Behn's *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* represents the first British colonial narrative. [28] Although the actress Anne Oldfield lamented in 1743 that "*Imoinda, Indiana, Belvidera* [three heroines from popular Restoration tragicomedies] no longer please," *Oroonoko* experienced a resurgence in stage popularity at mid-century as well as at its end, especially in other stage adaptations by John Hawkesworth, Francis Gentleman, and John

[28] On average, *Oroonoko* was performed once a year on the British stage between 1695 and 1815, although performances decreased in regularity across the eighteenth-century. Arthur Nichols suggests that *Oroonoko* demanded a declamatory style of acting more suited to practices of the Restoration and early eighteenth-century stage (190-1). More broadly, however, *Oroonoko* had a problematic relationship with the Abolition movement as it was used by both sides to illustrate different positions on colonial slavery. Susan B. Iwanisziw's *Oroonoko: Adaptations and Offshoots* offers a detailed history of *Oroonoko*'s life on stage in Southerne – and others' – adaptations.

Ferrier.[29] In the original version, Behn narrates the love story between Imoinda and Oroonoko, their eventual betrayal into slavery, and Oroonoko's failed attempt to lead a slave revolt when confronted with the specter of his unborn child's ultimate enslavement. She sets the narrative both in the exotic African kingdom of Coramantien as well as the brutal colonial landscape of Surinam, including occasional glimpses of primitive, prelapsarian communities formed by the South American natives. Southerne's adaptation of the text makes major changes, perhaps the most interesting the addition of a subplot detailing the adventures of the cross-dressing Charlot Weldon's search for a husband. The most significant change, however, alters Imoinda's skin color from black to white. This performative point of convergence between *Oroonoko* and *The Wanderer* creates a rich space for investigating questions of how colonial narratives shape individual attempts at self-fashioning and communal models of spectatorial perception.

Indeed, British theater-goers reveal an almost voyeuristic fascination over the reactions of non-Europeans to the play. In an often reprinted anecdote, two black young men (one the son of a "moorish king," the other his companion) were sent to England to receive a European education. While in England, the two men "frequently appeared at the theaters," where inevitably they saw a performance of *Oroonoko*. As the narrator describes, "When, seeing persons of their own colour, on the stage, the tender interview between Imoinda and Oroonoko … so strongly affected them, with that generous grief, which pure nature always feels, that the young prince was obliged to leave after the fourth act." His companion stayed until the end, "but wept the whole time" (*An authentic*

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[29] See Susan B. Iwanisziw's *Oroonoko: Adaptations and Offshoots* for a detailed history of these adaptations.

*account*, 3-4). This incident registers along spectrums of class hierarchy, urban entertainment practices, and culturally informed discussions of human nature. Like the Oroonoko on stage, the black men are part of an African aristocracy which links them to the tragedy of the "royal" Oroonoko's enslavement. According the British spectator narrating the story, the Africans are also, however, acculturated to the British entertainment scene – the narrator emphasizes that they attend the theater often – suggesting their inclusion within British cultural and social habits. The nature of the source and the way the Africans' reactions are mediated complicates the possibility of accessing an authentic, ethnically different reaction to the play. Despite the black spectators' acculturation, it does seem as if their reactions to Oroonoko and Imoinda's story strike an authentic note discordant with that of other white theater-goers. However much the prince's class and evident enjoyment of theater places him squarely within a Europeanized culture which garners wealth in part by commodifying black bodies, the trauma of Oroonoko and Imoinda's story provokes him to leave the theater. The prince's response, however, is both revelatory and still inscrutable. The fact that he leaves the theater constitutes a concrete response to the play but because the rest of his response takes place "off-stage," in other words, beyond the ability of the narrator to access because the response physically takes the prince outside the theater, and also represents an external reaction to an internal state of mind. Yet white theater-goers feel comfortable interpreting the prince's absence as caused by the "generous grief" which "pure nature" always feels, allowing them to situate his undoubtedly anxiety-producing action as an extreme form of moral revulsion common to *all* spectators. What we might feel is a

unique response to the staged trauma of Oroonoko's story the narrator interprets as a "natural" reaction. This exegetical sleight of hand functions on the one hand to erases difference between white and black spectators, while also shutting down interpretation of the prince's reaction as a troubling condemnation of colonial cruelty from a black other. His display of "pure" natural grief becomes authenticating culturally specific notions of human nature more generally.

If the prince's response, mediated by the white narrator, highlighted the extremes to which white spectators would take to constrict interpretation of different reactions to the play, Southerne's white Imoinda also enabled a critique of the perceived failures of urban feminine values (often implicated in Britain's growing expansion a colonial power) because she remained reassuringly white and British. Adopting a persona of cosmopolitan world-weariness, William Congreve, for example, contrasts Imoinda's native sensibility and artlessness with the artificial (female) performances of moral laxity and artificiality he pointedly locates within London urban spaces:

> If Virtue in a Heathen be a fault,
> Then Damn the Heathen-School where she [Imoinda] was taught,
> She might have learned to Cuckold, Jilt, and Sham,
> Had *Covent-Garden* been in *Surinam*. (969-70)

What makes Congreve's juxtaposition so interesting is its revelation of how Southerne's white Imoinda represents *both* the moral sensibility associated with British discourses of proper feminism as well as the supposed "genuine" simplicity of primitive others. Southerne's white Imoinda then functions both as an ideal representative of (native)

British feminism and as a critique of actual values circulating in London's commercial and newly colonizing society (Nussbaum, *Torrid Zones*, 1-2).

On the other hand, the memory of Imoinda's former blackness and the desire and anxiety her exotic appeal as partner in a mixed-race amour engenders in the audience made her a fascinating, troubling stage heroine. James Arbuckle appropriates the white Imoinda's dual, unstable meanings to focus his satiric portrait of the historical artificiality of the theater. The joke has an elaborate set-up of course. Put briefly, the speaker leaves a London playhouse so critical of current theater practice he dreams he journeys to "Pluto's Dominions" and meets the *actual* historical characters impersonated on stage. These dead heroes and heroines complain before Pluto that they are represented by actors and in costumes ill-suited to their stories. The ladies are particularly grieved by the voluminous petticoats required by their roles which constrict their movement, most seriously in moments requiring swooning or dying. Pluto, as narrated by the speaker, would be inclined to laugh had "*Imoinda* … not advanc'd [and] represented to *Pluto*, that this was no Subject of Merriment to any of those who were daily killed at the Theater" (285). She laments that once an actress performing her almost fell, and that if the actor playing Oroonoko had not had the presence of mind to step on her petticoat "that ten to one she would never have been able to get up again" (285). Imoinda especially desires that no "young Fop in the Pit" may see the color of her garters, explaining that the shape of her skirt tends to force her to fall backward, allowing the audience to see up her skirt (285). Amusing and inconsequential as this anecdote may appear, Arbuckle's story illuminates several troubling aspects of Imoinda's representation in the eighteenth century. The first

and most obvious point is that Imoinda serves as the butt of Arbuckle's theatrical joke about the "reality" of performance. In a play so tangled with rhetorics of colonial oppression, this feels like a further instance of Imoinda's subjugation. Yet, Arbuckle's larger satiric object – the gap between the historicity of a character and their representation on stage – asks us to consider in what ways a staged Imoinda might be rendered an artificial shadow next to her "real" referent.

In surveying the presence of the whitened Imoinda in writings about the theater we are left with certain inescapable questions raised by theater-goers and those who wrote about the theater. In what ways is the effaced black Imoinda of Behn's novella recalled by the white Imoinda on stage? What is the relationship between the two representations of Imoinda? And finally, in what ways does the whitened, staged Imoinda challenge narratives of British cultural authenticity? In the same way, the relationship between Juliet's performance in blackface and the authentic identity Burney depicts for her provokes us to ask if Burney reveals an "authentic" interiority for Juliet somehow separate from her blackface. What is the relationship between Burney's depiction of an opaque interiority alongside a representation of racial difference? In examining some of the ways in which *Oroonoko* has been situated and surrogated within theatrical rhetorics of authenticity – ranging from Congreve's utilization of Imoinda to critique the artificiality of British morals to James Arbuckle's baroque anxiety over the relationship between historical accuracy and artificiality in stage productions – we can see how representations of Imoinda straddle the unstable boundary between cultures encountering each other. Because even the white Imoinda encodes within her memories of her

blackened prototype, particularly through her representation as a white slave, Imoinda becomes an important reoccurring preoccupation for those concerned both with Britain's colonial and theatrical projects. In exploring the relationship between *Oroonoko* and *The Wanderer,* we can see how Imoinda's black skin is dramatically recovered in Juliet – only to be lost again – and how that loss functions as a crucial reminder for the ways in which black experience is lost and effaced, only re-appear in other guises in other narratives across the eighteenth century. By noting the relationship between Imoinda and Juliet, we can see that Imoinda in some ways becomes a complicated figure of obsession, and serves to remind us of Joseph Roach's contention that "the unspeakable cannot be rendered forever inexpressible" because "the most persistent mode of forgetting is memory imperfectly deferred," (4).

## III

Does Burney reveal an "authentic" interiority for Juliet somehow separate from her blackface? Or from her performances more broadly? In contrast to Evelina's self-revealing letters, or Camilla's agonized analysis of social faults committed, we get very few details of Juliet's inner life. Given the nature of Juliet's presentation in the novel, and the necessary mystery surrounding her identity and history (kept secret even from the reader), Burney focuses to a large extent on the ways external details indicate Juliet's interiority, particularly in detailing characters' reactions to Juliet's body. Characters display an enormous amount of interest in – even obsession for – Juliet's transforming,

troubling, disordered body, especially her skin. As with Imoinda, Juliet's changing skin color and her ability to blush perform necessary narrative functions as mediations of Juliet's character as an "other" to be colonized. One reason why many of the characters respond to Juliet in this manner is because prior to her transformation, all the characters in the text believe her blackface performance. No one in the first chapter of the novel doubts that Juliet is anything *but* black. More significantly, Burney also emphasizes Juliet's solitary position during her transformation. As with Imoinda's extra-textual, off-stage transformation from black to white between Behn and Southerne's texts, Juliet's metamorphosis from a black to a white woman is witnessed by none of the characters. For the first time in the novel, the meaning of Juliet's self-representation relies less on her audiences' hermeneutical control of her status and story, making her transformation that much more troubling. *The Wanderer* thus raises the problem of confronting both the black woman and the actress in blackface as a substantial question rather than a simple matter of theatrical performance that can be distinguished from "real" life.

In Juliet, Burney gestures towards theatrical representations of non-European women in British theater. Playwrights of early modern British dramas sometimes included a white heroine using blackface in order to protect herself or enact revenge, such as in Philip Massinger's *The Parliament of Love* and Richard Brome's *The English Moor*. In the *Parliament of Love,* for example, Beaupre recovers her husband's love by disguising herself as Moorish slave named Calista and uses a bed trick to get her husband to sleep with her. Virginia Mason Vaughn suggests that the discovery of a white heroine beneath the blackface often defined the comedic reversal in these early modern dramas: "The

sudden creation of whiteness out of blackness provides the miraculous theatrical spectacle required to resolve the complicated plot of tragicomedy" (117). Vaughn argues further that these blackened heroines created for the audience a double consciousness, because the audience *knows* they are seeing a white actor playing a white character disguised as black in the play. The presence of a black female character is thus transferred several steps away from reality, which negotiates an ironic space for the audience between an actual black body, the performed white body, and the doubly-performed blackface body. The double consciousness Vaughn describes supports Wahrman's contentions that the eighteenth century originally conceived of selfhood and race as theatrical and changeable. Yet in *The Wanderer* readers do not get the chance to develop the same ironic distance from Juliet's performance. Burney refrains from revealing to the reader that her heroine is not really black until the window shutters are thrown back to reveal her "dazzling" white skin (42-3). As readers, we become part of Burney's created audience, and we respond, along with the other characters in the novel, with surprise and shock to the revelation of Juliet's whiteness.

Even if an audience was able to develop distance from blackface performances through knowledge of a female white character being in disguise, Imoinda and Juliet rarely allow for this level of detachment. Imoinda, in particular, excited anxiety because the representation operated at one step closer to reality. Instead of a white actress portraying a white character in blackface, the white actress would portray a black character through the medium of black make-up. The problem of how psychologically and culturally to contain such a black female body on stage contributed to the disquiet

felt by audiences when confronted with the spectacle of a white actress in blackface. Critics have provided various reasons for why a staged black Imoinda might have caused this unease. Most often, we remind ourselves that actresses' bodies represented Western ideals of sexuality and beauty, what Charmaine Nelson identifies as "the Eurocentric assumption of true Womanhood as always already white" (2). An actress in blackface risked diminishing her discursive power on stage by veiling one of her fundamental claims to beauty – her white skin. White skin, in particular, was one of the most fundamental indexes revealing female virtue. Spectators could "read" moral qualities in the skin, such as embarrassment, sorrow and anger, through the activity of female blushing. Blushing became a cultural shorthand for indicating female virtue in the eighteenth century, and thus one reason why Southerne's Imoinda became white, as Felicity Nussbaum observes: "Southerne's decision to make Imoinda white and red, a fair woman capable of blushing and of having those blushes perceived on her white skin, in repeated in numerous versions produced on stage throughout the century" (*Limits,* 157). Burney, not able to directly reveal Juliet's virtue, can only gesture towards it by her ability to blush, even through her certain performance obstacles, such as make-up. When Juliet is in blackface, Burney narrates: "A crimson of the deepest hue forced its way through her dark complexion: her very eyes reddened with blushes" (33). Later, during the private production of *The Provok'd Husband*, spectators note of Juliet's performance: "The rouge, put on for the occasion, was paler than the blushes which burnt though it on her cheeks" (96).

The solution to the spectacle of the black woman seems to have been either to silence

her or to bleach her black skin, both attempts at racial forgetting. In Behn's novella, for instance, the problem of Imoinda's silencing has remained a critical dilemma.[30] In one dramatic moment of silencing, Imoinda is called to the king's harem, the invitation consisting of a veil designed to signal her new narrative function as a placeholder for male power: "He was therefore no sooner got to his apartment, but he sent the royal veil to Imoinda, that is, the ceremony of invitation he sends the lady he has a mind to honour with his bed; a veil, with which she is covered and secured for the king's use; and it is death to disobey, besides, held a most impious disobedience" (19). As Ros Ballaster, Joyce Green MacDonald, and others have noted, Imoinda's story itself is silenced – or veiled – in the novel because of its necessary mediation through Behn, who labors to narrate a complicated critique/justification of rising British colonialism. MacDonald argues, for instance, that Behn's relationship to Imoinda serves to naturalize English racial superiority, while Ballaster reminds us that the theatrical, fiction-making Behn with her insistently invoked "Female pen" contrasts sharply with the alternative gender position indicated by the passive Imoinda, who Behn rarely allows space to speak directly in the text (MacDonald 112, Ballaster 293). Candy B.K. Schille takes a moment to imagine Behn's story as real, and wonders if Imoinda *could* have related her story to Behn or anyone else, noting that Behn never indicates Imoinda can speak English at all (15). Susan Andrade concludes, furthermore, that Imoinda "is absolutely necessary to the

[30] Srinivas Aravamudan argues in *Tropicopolitans* that criticism of *Oroonoko* as fractured along the lines of interpretative possibility Oroonoko and Imoinda represent in the text. If Oroonoko in some ways represents the capacity of a Western writer to imagine a black other, then Imoinda's depiction in the novel reveals the opposite impulse. Any attempt to interpret Oroonoko then must fall, to some extent, into "oroonokoism" and "imoindaism," as he explains, "Imoindaism can be seen as a negative theology that mourns the absences created by colonialist representation, just as much as oroonokoism fetishizes the presence of the colonial object" (58).

ideology of the text. She first prevents the white woman from committing miscegenation, and then becomes the willing martyr whose death protects the narrator from the fate of Desdemona" (206). Given the passivity of Imoinda's representation in *Oroonoko*, and the seeming necessity for Behn to mediate the black woman's story, MacDonald suggests that Behn herself began Imoinda's transformation into an almost entirely silenced, "bleached" heroine in Southerne's play (112).

Indeed, in Southerne's dramatic adaptation, this instinct to efface Imoinda has important performance implications. Imoinda has so few lines in Southerne's version of the story that one actress preparing for the part had to be given careful instructions on how to make each line count. In 1733, poet and theater critic Aaron Hill advised an actress, a Miss Holliday[31], to modulate her voice, and "raise it a little higher" (139). The necessity of speaking louder and higher in order to force attention to Imoinda's lines, however could result in voice exhaustion. To counteract this and to bring further emphasis to Imoinda's lines, Hill instructs the actress to "make use of *pauses*," explaining, "The actor who pauses judiciously, will be sure to appear in earnest, like the conceiver of what he utters; whereas, without pausing, the words, arising too fast for the thought, demonstrate him but a repeater of what he should seem to invent, before he expresses it" (139, 140). Because Hill is concerned primarily with avoiding any trace of artificiality in Miss Holliday's portrayal of Imoinda, he also suggests, in a curious detail, that the actress keep her eyes on the person with whom she is speaking, rather than directing her words towards the audience (and thereby allowing them to see her beautiful

[31] Elizabeth Holliday (Mrs. William Mills II) acted on the London stage in the 1730s. She first performed Imoinda 7 December 1733 (Highfill, et al. 257-8).

visage) (141-2). Hill's highly specific advice on movement, his emphatic belief that the audience should see Imoinda's face and the play of emotions across her face, demonstrates the way Southerne's play relied on the audience responding with a crescendo of emotional sentimentality to the specter of the (beautiful) white female slave. The complicated acting instructions indicate to us the ways in which the figure of the white female slave trivialized the impact of black experience by displacing enflaming emotions, emotions which might not result in reciprocal engagement with the trauma of actual black experience. Indeed, Hill suggests that Imoinda (even the beautiful white version of Imoinda) should be strangely evacuated of an interior, emotional life. He pinpoints the impact such a relatively natural style of acting should have on the audience: "your voice should not *express* [emotion], but *affect* it" (141). By giving these suggestions, Hill acknowledges that the dramatic impact of Imoinda's narrative meaning in Southerne's drama is defined by how well she can induce specific emotional responses in the audience, and thus demonstrates how the recognition of what we might call an "enslaved subjectivity" (or recognition of a self in a state of slavery) was refigured as an emotional response in the spectators of those subjectivities.[32]

While in Behn's novella Imoinda's story is always mediated (to the point that we wonder if Imoinda can even speak English), and in Southerne's play actresses had to speak in such a way as to make every line count, *The Wanderer* reveals similar interest on the means by which others intervene in the telling of Juliet's story. The mystery of

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[32] It appears that, despite Hill's advice (he even went so far as to send an annotated copy of the script with detailed instructions on pauses, gestures, and movement), Miss Holliday was not successful in the role: "I can't say, she answered the hopes, I had conceiv'd of her; she spoke too low, and faint a voice; and *look'd* and *mov'd,* with too little force" (146).

Juliet's identity creates a narrative void, which other characters (and readers) attempt to fill with explanations of Juliet's past and her present character. To that end, Burney focuses less on what Juliet says than on how her body is perceived. She seems particularly interested in signaling Juliet's audience's obsession with her black skin by slowing her disclosure of her heroine's identity through the course of the entire first chapter. At the beginning of the novel Juliet figures only as a linguistic presence, a French voice calling in the night, pleading for shelter on a ship sailing for England away from revolutionary France. At first this voice is even gender neutral, and the characters are content to ignore the voice calling from the shore. Only when the passengers realize the voice crying for aid is a female voice do two passengers, whom we discover later to be Harleigh and Admiral Powel, appeal on her behalf: "Nay, since she is but a woman," the Admiral argues, "and in distress, save her, pilot, in God's name! … A woman, a child, and a fallen enemy, are three persons that every true Briton should scorn to misuse" (19). That the Admiral has to invoke British ethical superiority in order to aid the pleading Frenchwoman despite almost all the others' characters resistance contributes to the barbed nature of Burney's satire. After Juliet comes aboard, we see nothing but her costume (which Elinor declares "vulgar"), but she is wrapped too tightly against the cold to make her skin color readily apparent. After it becomes evident that Juliet does know English (although characters continue to assume she is a Frenchwoman until later), Burney carefully reveals only parts of Juliet's body. At first, it is only her hands: "Just then the stranger, having taken off her gloves, to arrange an old shawl, in which she was wrapt, exhibited hands and arms of so dark a colour, that they might rather be styled

black than brown" (19). The agonizingly slow pace of Juliet's self-disclosure finally ends when her face becomes clear: "The wind just then blowing back the prominent borders of a French night-cap, which had almost concealed all her features, displayed a large black patch, that covered half her left cheek, and a broad black ribbon, which bound a bandage of cloth over the right side of her forehead" (20). Like Imoinda's veil, the thick bandages crossing Juliet's black face signal that the black body is always already fragmented and split in the world of the novel. The bandages also hint that the details of Juliet's identity, continually overdetermined by skin color, remain concealed, inchoate, marked by a violent history.

Yet Burney buries the revelation of Juliet's white skin to a paragraph at the end of another chapter. When Juliet's blackface fades, for instance, Burney focuses both on the lack of audience for Juliet's transformation, and then on the spectacle of its revelation:

> This was the manifest alteration in the complexion of her attendant, which, from a regular and equally dark hue, appeared, on the second morning, to be smeared and streaked; and on the third, to be of a dusky white … When, however, on the fourth day, the shutters of the chamber, which, to give it a more sickly character, had hitherto been closed, were suffered to admit the sunbeams of a cheerful winter's morning, Mrs. Ireton was directed, by their rays, to a full and marvelous view, of a skin changed from a tint nearly black, to the brightest, whitest, and most dazzling fairness. (42-3)

The theatrical elements to this scene – especially the dramatic opening of the window shutter – almost appears parodic compared to the slow and serious revelation of Juliet's

black skin earlier in the novel. Indeed, Mrs. Ireton's response is to sardonically question the limits of Juliet's bodily boundaries, especially her embodiment as a (white) woman of a certain height and skin color:

> You have been bruised and beaten; and dirty and clean; and ragged and whole; and wounded and healed; and a European and a Creole, in less than a week. I suppose, next, you will dwindle into a dwarf; and then, perhaps, find some surprising contrivance to shoot up into a giantess. There is nothing than cannot be too much to expect from so great an adept in metamorphosis. (46)

Mrs. Ireton sarcastically indicates an ironic truth – that the material limits of Juliet's subjectivity is more ontologically stable when disguised than when she reveals a prior "reality" of selfhood, metonymically signaled by her "dazzling" white skin. As we have seen, Juliet's transformations crucially rehearse Imoinda's change from black heroine to a white European with "dazzling" white skin. Burney's focus on Juliet's spectacular revelation parallels the obsession for Imoinda demonstrated by characters in Behn's novella and Southerne's play. Like Juliet, Imoinda is "constituted entirely through her body" (Andrade 205).

The elements of Juliet's body – from the darkness of her skin to the structure of her nose – only serve to catalyze gossip and conjecture on the part of the English passengers, as they participate in a parody of a traditional method of disclosing identity in older narratives – the blazon. Ireton, for instance, says, "She wants a little bleaching, to be sure; but she has not bad eyes; nor a bad nose, neither" (27). Ireton's description is implicitly violent both in the way it fragments and reduces Juliet's face to certain characteristics and

in the way it recommends that her skin ought to be caustically blanched in order for her body to matter in the society in which Juliet finds herself. Ireton's remark, however much he may have meant it in jest, threatens to erase Juliet's black body from British society. In this way, Juliet's "bleaching" constitutes *The Wanderer'*s clearest performative event. It highlights race as both culturally constructed but ontologically meaningful within the confines of the Juliet's performance within this local community. Juliet therefore demonstrates the cultural impact of female blackface performance on Brighthelmstone society: "What we take to be an 'internal' feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts" (Butler xv). Juliet's "certain bodily acts" destabilize ontological categories of gender and race, while simultaneously representing an essential black presence erased or "bleached" from British performative events and memory.[33]

*The Wanderer* complicates historical efforts to neutralize the revolutionary narrative potential of the black woman by rendering the transformation from black to white not as a dialogue between texts, but as an event within a single text, even within a single paragraph. Indeed, Juliet's transformation is constantly retold and remembered in the narrative by other characters determined to categorize Juliet. Once black, Juliet cannot be "re-racialized" as white, no matter how "dazzling" her skin becomes. Her story will continue to become tangled with wider narratives of revolution and empire, which often

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[33] Again, it is useful to refer to Dror Wahrman's historicized account of British conceptions of identity in the eighteenth century. Wahrman contends that what he calls the *ancien régime* of identity did not provoke an existential crisis. Yet, as older notions of fluid, mutable identities receded in favor of more modern understandings of a stable, fixed self, the prospect of suffering an existential crisis became more real (198). Juliet, in her unapologetic assumption of troubling disguises, seems to provoke these crises in the characters who encounter her.

requires the silencing of other voices. A black Imoinda had to be literally written out of the story before *Oroonoko* can be represented on stage. Her silencing parallels Imoinda's story in that Juliet's speech, while narrated, is not often verbalized in the novel. One critic calls Juliet's proficiency at containing the telling of her story her "epistemological control," and like Imoinda, Juliet is more often than not defined by her silence and her *refusal* to represent her story verbally (Anderson 424). Burney, for instance, focuses on Juliet non-verbal expressions and silence in her final confrontation with her husband, describing the "speechless agony" in Juliet's eyes, and repeatedly referencing her muteness (727-29). This all despite Harleigh's insistence that she "'Speak, Madam, speak! Utter but a syllable! – Deign only to turn towards me! – Pronounce but with your eyes that he has no legal claim, and I will instantly secure your liberty, – even from myself! – even from all mankind! – Speak! – turn! – look but a moment this way! – One word! one single word!" (729). Juliet still remains silent, and in that silence we see Juliet's deliberate refusal to hand over her "self," perhaps a more radical narrative move than even Burney's representation of Juliet's unstable, changing identity as read by others around her.

## VI

While some victimization is obviously implied by Juliet and Imoinda's dramatic silences and performative bleaching, Juliet's deferred self-disclosures may ultimately represent constructive acts of reviving historical memories repressed by the trauma of

colonialism, specifically the act of cultural forgetting signified by the bleaching of both Imoinda and Juliet's black skin. Juliet's temporary presence as a black woman in the text does signal, rather pointedly, the trauma a community faces when it attempts to erase cultural Others from its memories and narratives. Southerne evidently thought he was reversing at least some aspects of cultural forgetting by transferring Behn's representation of Oroonoko to the stage. He says of Behn:

> She had a great Command of the Stage; and I have often wonder'd that she would bury her Favourite Hero in a *Novel*, when she might have reviv'd him in the *Scene*. She thought either that no Actor could represent him; or she could not bear him represented: And I believe the last, when I remember what I have heard from a Friend of hers, That she always told his Story, more feelingly, that she writ it. (8)

Although probably written as a barbed jest at Behn's rumored amour with the royal slave, "his choice of words – remember, revive, bury – also suggests that Southern interprets Behn's repeated acts of storytelling as acts of remembrance, as memorial exhumations, as elegies for her dead friend" (Rivero 447). In the same way, Juliet's repeated, ritualized donning of disguise in *The Wanderer* may also function as acts of remembrance, not just of "female difficulties," but of the difficulties encountered by those on the margin of memory. In whatever disguise, Juliet shares "the lot of the low, the outcast, the forgotten" (Doody 360).

Burney challenges binary oppositions of class and race by creating a heroine notoriously difficult to pin down in the narrative. The sheer audacity of Burney's choice

for Juliet's initial disguise (why *this* disguise and not some other?) ought to catapult *The Wanderer* to a central place in scholarly inquiry as we expand our understanding of how non-white bodies were constructed at the periphery of eighteenth-century memory and history, especially in light of Felicity Nussbaum's reminder that "the eighteenth century is uniquely characterized by colour-shifting fictive figures" ("Women and Race," 74). Instead, *The Wanderer,* Burney's "least-liked, least-known, and most difficult novel," is often just as ostracized as Burney's heroine (Salih 301). Juliet's representation of blackness should not remain "buried in a novel," but take center stage in critical discussions of race, identity, and performativity in the long eighteenth century. It would be a pity, after all, to remain like Mrs. Maple, who is teased by Elinor for failing to recognize the newly white Juliet: "Who, Aunt? Why your memory is shorter than ever! Don't you recollect our dingy French companion, that you took such a mighty fancy to?" (57).

# CHAPTER III

Forgetting Friday: Making Sense of Juliet as a "Female Robinson Crusoe"

"Who will name this silence
respect? Those forced, hoarse hosannas
awe?"[34]

I

> Here, and thus felicitously, ended, with the acknowledgement of her name, and her family, the DIFFICULTIES of the WANDERER; – a being who had been cast upon herself; a female Robinson Crusoe, as unaided and unprotected, though in the midst of the world, as that imaginary hero in his uninhabited island; and reduced either to sink, though inanition, to non-entity, or to be rescued from famine and death by such resources as she could find, independently, in herself. (873)

Frances Burney's 1814 novel, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties,* ends the narrative with an image linking the heroine of the work, Juliet Granville, to Robinson Crusoe. Burney's appropriation of this literary antecedent is curious on several fronts. For one thing, Burney transforms the physical terrain of Crusoe's "uninhabited island" into a psychological landscape – Juliet is "cast upon herself," a deeply recursive, ongoing mental move which determines her behavior throughout the novel. Indeed, the rest of the passage emphasizes that the "resources" Juliet utilizes, unlike the remnants of the ship's

[34] Derek Walcott, "Parades, Parades," *Selected Poetry* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1993). 41-3.

stores Crusoe carefully recovers, catalogues, and stores during his island stay, are internal attributes of character. Given her unusual situation, particularly her inability to reveal her name and history, Juliet struggles to negotiate strictures on feminine behavior while maintaining financial independence, a problem Burney depicts grammatically through her use of the passive voice: Juliet's agency is strangely evacuated from the image because she must "be rescued from famine and death," which suggests that someone else will do the rescuing. The sentence ends, however, doubling back and claiming that the rescuer can only be Juliet herself.

Given the difficulty of the passage, which is challenging even at the level of grammar, critics have struggled to determine Burney's purpose in linking Juliet's story with that most famous of castaways. [35] Because of Burney's emphatic insistence on Juliet's self-reliance and perseverance in the comparison, most have analyzed Juliet's description as a "female Robinson Crusoe" in terms of female work and labor.[36] Indeed, the comparison's placement at the end of the novel has caused many scholars to understand it as the final word on Burney's ideological purpose for dwelling so insistently on the material conditions of Juliet's silence and poverty. Following in the footsteps of critics like Sara Salih and Margaret Anne Doody, however, I would like to

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[35] Burney, significantly, is not the first to use to comparison of a female character to Robinson Crusoe. Recently, Jeannine Blackwell and C.M. Owen have traced in their work a tradition of re-imaginings of the Crusoe narrative in female terms. Blackwell writes that the "female Robinson, with her initiative and autonomy, is a nearly forgotten novel of the self-generating woman of the modern era" (21).

[36] One of the finest analyses of Juliet's search for work remains Margaret Anne Doody's discussion in *The Life in the Works*. In her chapter on *The Wanderer*, she argues that the novel provides one of the earliest investigations of proletarian alienation from the means of production. Mascha Gemmeke has most recently suggested that work allows Juliet to create an identity for herself independent of a name or family history. She admits, however, that Juliet fails to be defined by a profession because she changes positions too quickly (172).

reconsider the intersection between the Crusoe comparison in terms of Juliet's critical disruption of the novel's narratives of economic success *and* race and empire. *Robinson Crusoe* may be one of our founding economic narratives, but we risk losing the opportunity to explore important nuances in Juliet's story if we do not situate *The Wanderer* as a response to *Robinson Crusoe'*s importance as a colonial narrative.[37] Sara Salih, for instance, believes that the comparison expresses Burney's desire to resituate Juliet, who entered the novel as a black woman and continued to be associated with the black poor throughout the novel, within a complacent, colonizing British society, resulting in what she calls "an ironic reversal of perspective" in terms of the novel's narrative focus (313). Salih, in particular, views Juliet's marriage into the British gentry as a sign that Juliet has now been fully re-integrated into the imperialistic and patriarchal British cultural landscape. Margaret Anne Doody, however, suggests that Burney's re-imagining of Juliet's story as a castaway narrative itself constitutes a powerful indictment of English patriarchy and complacency, especially as it impacts women's work: The "female Robinson Crusoe" is "a phrase both plangent in its suggestion of loneliness, and satiric. For the poor woman who tries to earn her own living, contemporary England is a desert island" (350). Although Doody speaks more specifically of the economic

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[37] Ian Watt, following earlier theorists such as Karl Marx, famously analyzed *Robinson Crusoe* as an instance of "economic individualism" in his narrative of the rise of the English novel (63-4). More recently, Peter Hulme was one of the first to rethink the significance of *Robinson Crusoe* in terms of colonialism, and wrote of the tendency to read the novel as the founding economic narrative, "There is a danger here of not seeing the historical wood for the economic trees. Too great an emphasis on the financial detail of Crusoe's career can obscure the important way in which, however sketchily, the early chapters of the book recapitulate the European 'history of discovery" (185). Srinivas Aravamudan, of course, argues that the imperialism in *Robinson Crusoe* may be purely incidental on the part of Defoe: "For Defoe, adventure stories were like thought-experiments. In his hands, the adventure novel is a means of diagnosing global positioning for national domestic advantage. Adventure leads to empire in Defoe's writings. And yet imperial acquisition seems merely incidental to the adventure tale … Colonial acquisition, in all of Defoe's writings, is a much more unreliable process than it has sometimes been portrayed" (45).

wasteland England represents for a single, laboring woman, her comparison is significant because it re-imagines the English landscape to be as uncanny as anything British explorers would discover in new regions. England, because of the native hostility and economic trials Juliet encounters, in a very real sense becomes for her a desert island at the periphery, instead of representing a free, wealthy metropole at the center of a burgeoning economic and cultural empire to which she can have access. Rather than remaining as the "favoured isle" suggested by Burney in her preface to the novel, England becomes a strange, unfamiliar, uncanny place for Juliet (9).

Although Salih and Doody interpret the Crusoe comparison to very different ends, both understand it to be functioning as a crucial reversal of perspective in the novel, and thus a moment where readers must make sense of their own relationship to Juliet's position in the novel. In this way, readers of the novel must confront Juliet's difference as she shifts from poor black woman to poor white woman to eventually becoming part of the gentry. One way characters try to integrate Juliet into the social landscape is by constructing their own names for and stories about Juliet. While these names work at a basic level as epistemological attempts by characters to "know" Juliet by relating her strangeness to remembered stories, *The Wanderer* also explores how this impulse to impose a familiar narrative on the strange is a profoundly colonial enterprise, as Max Novak explains: "Insofar as Crusoe is representative of the colonizing mind, he is clearly not entirely a sympathetic figure. Like Columbus and the Spaniards who followed him, Crusoe understands the 'power of naming' as a form of possession" (51). The names other characters bestow on Juliet and the stories they tell about her become an implicit

way to "colonize" her, or to envelop her in the various vocational and commercial circulations of the community by exerting their own power to describe how Juliet fits into those circulations. Indeed, by creating new names and stories for Juliet, characters in *The Wanderer* ultimately follow the example of Robinson Crusoe himself, who, as Michael Seidel argues, understands his island stay by continually casting himself as a participant in various enterprises of story-telling: "In the three hundred years since Defoe published *The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* the most fertile reader of the Crusoe story is Robinson Crusoe himself" ("Varieties," 182). Juliet, by contrast, will come to represent the colonial object who must be renamed, but her treatment will also undermine British self-styled mythologies of superiority and complacency, resulting in England's uncanny transformation into a deserted, alien *terra incognita* as strange as Crusoe's island.

By calling her heroine the "Female Robinson Crusoe," Burney therefore participates in this instinct on the part of other characters to re-narrate Juliet's story, although her re-narration of Juliet works counter to the stories of characters in the novel because she casts Juliet as a successful castaway. The comparison to Crusoe, however, has a crucially cynical thrust within this re-narration because Juliet's own success as an agent in *The Wanderer* is debatable. At crucial moments, she has had to rely on the aid – charitably given or not – of other characters even when her pride would like to dictate that she reject their help. Nevertheless, many critics argue some version of Julia Epstein's thesis that Juliet's namelessness is actually a kind of power. Epstein in *The Iron Pen* suggests that Juliet's namelessness and inscrutability place her in a position of power, if not socially,

then certainly psychologically:

> Juliet's namelessness through most of the narrative – a namelessness far more radically isolating for Juliet than it had been for any of Burney's previous heroines – represents a daring political statement on Burney's part. A woman's name indicates not her identity *tout court*, but her social identity … To lack a name is to belong to no one, that is, to belong to oneself. (178)

What seems at stake in the Crusoe comparison is the representation of possession in the novel. Does Juliet's physical and mental labor confer self-possession, an alternative economy of self-narration which works to found self-possession in the retention and strengthening of certain internal qualities of character? Or, do the repeated portrayals of characters as powerful storytellers reify Juliet within a dominant colonizing economy? Juliet's namelessness may only indicate her profound powerlessness as an isolated person circulating outside the traditional circuits of family heritage and communal ties and leaves her open to the storytelling instincts of other characters she comes into contact with.

We can situate our readings of these complex moments of possession at several points in the novel. Many of the characters', especially Mrs. Ireton's, reaction to Juliet as a woman in blackface by locating her within a circulation of tramps, itinerant actors, and beggars – or those members of society who few possessions. Burney complicates Mrs. Ireton's status as a powerful storyteller, however, by her depiction of Mrs. Ireton's treatment of her black servant, Mungo. Mrs. Ireton attempts to treat Mungo as a possession, but his capacity to laugh at her, and her misunderstanding of current British

legal decisions regarding slavery, undercut her efforts to transform her household into a reflection of the British Empire. Juliet herself perhaps most clearly becomes part of this economy of persons when she is advertised in the newspaper as a runaway wife, similar to the way runaway servants and slaves were described, but the narrative blazon of her body in the advertisement also reflects the ways encounters with ethnic and racial others were depicted in English narratives like *Robinson Crusoe*. Juliet ultimately tries to remove herself from these circulations of power by fleeing to the New Forest, where as a solitary wanderer, she can be free from the initiatives of other characters, particularly her cruel French husband, to possess her. Burney, however, transforms Juliet's attempt to "own" nature, through an ecstatic vision of her communion with the landscape, into a nightmare when Juliet becomes lost at night in the forest, suggesting that any solitary enterprise at possession may only result in failure. In the end, Burney perhaps allows Sir Jaspar, the comical, gouty old bachelor, to gesture towards her vision of the kind of communitarian narrative economy Burney might endorse. When Juliet does not possess the money to pay her debts to Miss Bydel, Sir Jaspar hides coins in Miss Bydel's workbasket, and then claims that Juliet paid the money and Miss Bydel merely forgot. Sir Jaspar, in other words, makes recourse to an alternative narrative of the past in order to save Juliet from the embarrassments of poverty. His fabricated memory works because Sir Jaspar retells the past as a whimsical narrative publicly giving Juliet the credit for the payment, which thus satisfies Miss Bydel while leaving Juliet in possession of the story –

and of herself.

II

Although Burney keeps much of Juliet's story, including her real name of Lady Juliet Granville, secret until well into the novel, we eventually discover that she dons various disguises in order to escape a forced marriage to a brutal French commissioner. This commissioner, Julia Epstein notes, is never named himself, which alternately provides him with power, as a nightmarish, unnamed monster, but also dehumanizes him (177). In *The Wanderer,* he functions primarily to propel the plot as Juliet struggles to escape his terrifying force, but he exits the story in a perfunctory off-stage death which diffuses some of the terrible energy he represented. This terrible energy centers on how this nameless husband, like many of the characters in the story, tries to impose a name and a history upon Juliet. While Juliet is the daughter of a valid, but unrecognized, first marriage between a nobleman and a woman much below him in status, Juliet's uncle, Lord Denmeath, refuses to recognize her, and the papers proving her lineage are casualties of the French upheaval during Robespierre's reign. All Juliet possesses is a promissory note for £6,000 from Lord Denmeath if she marries a Frenchman and remains on the continent, or, essentially a bribe to forget her family name and accept a French heritage. A French commissioner discovers Juliet's note, compels her to marry him, and attempts to force her to sign the money over to him by threatening to send her beloved French guardian, a Bishop, to the guillotine. The fragments of textual history which circulate around Juliet, such as the promissory note, constitute the only means by which

Juliet might be able to "prove" or substantiate, by creating a legal narrative about the heroine, her identity, but these textual pieces remain vulnerable because they can be destroyed or used by others. Thus, Juliet's mysterious history, a drama of financial maneuvering, lost historical texts, and forced identity, by which characters attempt both to commodify and control Juliet's selfhood (which is her real family name?), forms the backdrop to *The Wanderer*, and contributes to the sense we get that names, when it suits characters' interests, can be just as mutable and interchangeable as Juliet's disguises. Lord Denmeath and Juliet's husband attempt to deny or change Juliet's name – and thus her self-presentation – at whim. Other characters provide her with their own nicknames in order to describe what she represents to them: she is variously called the "fair unknown," the "Incognita," the "frenchified swindler," and finally "Miss Ellis."[38] Thus, the paradox of Juliet's virtuous difference creates an almost pathological need for other characters to resituate Juliet within their native circulations and landscapes – both the interior spaces of drawing rooms and public concert halls in Brighthelmstone as well as the exterior spaces of forests, roadways, and monuments by providing her with names which suggest a certain narrative and constrict Juliet's own history.

While Juliet remains the "fair stranger" and the "Incognita," names that denote the unknowableness of her life and history, through much of the beginning of the novel, it is the revelation that she has performed blackness that creates the conditions whereby other characters question her racial identity, and thus her place within their insular social circle.

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[38] Margaret Anne Doody famously reminded us, however, that even though the moniker "Miss Ellis" was bestowed on Juliet, that the name forcefully demands recognition of the presence of woman: "We can hear in their names the ring of *elle … elle.* Elle is" (*Life*, 331).

In a satirically virtuosic tirade, Mrs. Ireton explains the revelation of Juliet's whiteness by recourse to various stage and economic practices more familiar to her environment than the radical "fact" of Juliet's unusual disguise. She situates Juliet within an alternative, if still crucially familiar, circulation of itinerant beggars and actors, vocations which gesture towards the fluidity of Juliet's self-presentation: "Will it be impertinent, too, if I enquire whether you always travel with that collection of bandages and patches? and of black and white outsides? or whether you sometimes change them for wooden legs and arms?" (45). In Mrs. Ireton's imagery, the human body is fragmented into patches, limbs, and colors, which are fragmentary and interchangeable. Mrs. Ireton's vision of Juliet's body is thus fundamentally dehumanized, indicated by the way Mrs. Ireton concludes by re-imagining Juliet's revelation of racial identity as the assumption of an expensive costume: "Why that new skin must have cost you more than your new gown" (45). Mrs. Ireton positions Juliet's performed and patched-up body within a circulation of other bodies at the periphery of their social and economic milieu, where these bodies have been reified and reduced to the fragments of costume. Mrs. Ireton's narrative also suggests, in a sense, that Juliet has some agency over how her body circulates within this economy. According to Mrs. Ireton, Juliet can herself choose which patches or wooden limbs she uses to disguise her body. Once her disguise has been revealed, other characters can therefore go from calling Juliet the "fair stranger" to the "frenchified swindler," where the epithet of "swindler" here indicates the extent to which Juliet's self-presentation classes her within a labor force at the periphery of the accepted circulations of the British economy.

If Juliet's disguised body is transgressive because it provokes Mrs. Ireton to situate

her within a class of vagrants and criminals, or outside the standard economy of labor, her body becomes part of the social economy, however, because of her status as the "possession" of her husband. Juliet's domestic situation becomes a matter of public importance when her French husband advertises for her return in the newspapers. The short advertisement is significant because its depiction of Juliet reduces her subjectivity to a legal and domestic transgression, then to an assemblage of body parts, and finally to an assumed name:

> ELOPED from her HUSBAND,
>
> A young woman, tall, fair, blue-eyed; her face oval; her nose Grecian; her mouth small; her cheeks high coloured; her chin dimpled; and her hair of a glossy light brown.
>
> She goes commonly by the name of Miss Ellis.
>
> Whoever will send an account where she may be met with, or where she has been seen, to *** Attorney, in *** Street London, shall receive a very handsome reward. (756)

Similar to the way runaway slaves and servants were advertised in the newspaper, this public notice imposes a certain reading on Juliet's wanderings, one that underscores her condition as a disobedient wife transgressing the authority of her husband, demonstrated visually through stressed words (Czechowski 239). The advertisement's blazon also emphasizes Juliet's beauty, but in such a way that recalls other moments of blazon in narratives concerned with depicting and describing a racial other, often rendered the possessions of colonizing subjects. Robinson Crusoe, for instance, carefully catalogues

Friday's facial features, in order, it seems, to authenticate his reading of Friday's character against a conventional spectrum of the civilized and the savage:

> He had a good Countenance, not a fierce and surly Aspect; but seem'd to have something very manly in his Face, and yet he had all the Sweetness and Softness of an European in his Countenance, especially when he smil'd. His Hair was long and black, not curl'd like Wool; his Forehead very high, and large, and a great Vivacity and sparkling Sharpness in his Eyes. The Colour of his Skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of any ugly yellow nauseous tawny. (148-9)

Robinson Crusoe is like Mrs. Ireton in that his confrontation with an other provokes him to read the familiar onto Friday's body. In doing so, Defoe works to authorize himself as the primary reader and fiction-maker regarding Friday. He displays this confidence most visually when he describes and interprets Friday's reaction to being saved from the cannibals: "Then he kneel'd down again, kiss'd the Ground, and laid his Head upon the Ground, and taking me by the Foot, set my Foot upon his Head; this it seems was a token of swearing to be my Slave forever" (147). Defoe interprets Friday's body language as an eternal covenant, but the verb "seems" also constricts the authority of Defoe's reading. The verb choice also obliquely gestures toward an alternative narrative which could encompass Friday's own version of the event. Whatever the narrative hesitancy suggested by the verb "seems," however, Friday quickly becomes an integral part of Crusoe's island economy as a laborer, who, significantly, has no real possession of the products of that labor or input in the fashioning of Defoe's island narrative. In the same way, Juliet's

husband publicly circulates a narrative defining her. Juliet's husband is thus more like Robinson Crusoe than Juliet herself in that his newspaper advertisement narrates Juliet as his possession.

Juliet's racially unstable body continues to invite the imposition of names and epithets from other characters throughout the novel. Mr. Ireton, for instance, says of Juliet when she is still in blackface that she is a "black insect buzzing about us still" (27). While the name Mr. Ireton constructs for the black Juliet, which associates her not with the exotic or the strange, but with the merely irritating, in her depiction of Mrs. Ireton's young servant, Mungo, Burney more overtly renders her interest in the narrative tensions which coalesce around the politics of naming, storytelling, and possession. Burney first describes Mungo as Mrs. Ireton's "favourite" because he is the "most submissive," suggesting how Mungo's self-presentation is impacted by his lowly status as the servant of his employer (479). When we first see Mungo, however, he is trying not laugh as Mrs. Ireton is annoyed by the antics of her spoiled dog and nephew:

> Upon perceiving her favourite young negro nearly suffocating with stifled laughter, through thrusting both his knuckles into his capacious mouth, to prevent its loud explosion. "So this amuses you, does it, Sir? You think it very comical? You are so kind as to be entertained, are you? … I shall make it my business to shew my sense of my good fortune; and, to give you a proof, Sir, of my desire to contribute to your gaiety, to-morrow morning I will have you shipped back to the West Indies. And there, that your joy may be complete, I shall issue orders that you may be striped till you jump, and that you may jump,

-- you little black imp! – between every stripe!" (481-2)

Upon first reading, Burney clumsily seems to have had recourse to the most unsatisfying aspects of stereotyping present in eighteenth-century racial discourse. We see in Mungo the exemplar of every stereotype of race from the eighteenth-century, from descriptions of his grin, his "capacious mouth," and his trembling servility, suggesting that Burney herself is complicit in impulse to read and narrate the black body in certain ways. Yet, Tara Czechowski notes the complicated contextual history of Mungo's name. Although a common, stereotypical nickname for the slave by the end of the eighteenth century, his namesake originates from Charles Dibdin and Isaac Bickerstaffe's play *The Padlock* (1768), where the black servant shrewdly betrays his master by admitting the admirer of his master's young fiancée into the house, thus becoming the driving force behind the plot. Although Burney's Mungo does not quite have the same catalytic effect, Czechowski argues that it may be just as significant for Burney's narrative purposes that she allows Mungo to laugh behind his mistress's back: "Burney's portrayal of Mungo's insolence credits him with an eye equally critical of Mrs. Ireton's behavior as Juliet" (226).

While violent in its rendering of what Mrs. Ireton threatens to do to Mungo, the scene also paradoxically emphasizes her powerlessness. Although some critics have called Mrs. Ireton a slaveowner, such a designation is not strictly true in a legal sense.[39] The Mansfield Decision of 1772, which became something of a cause célèbre for activists on both sides of abolition, was an important legal case involving a black servant named

[39] Margaret Anne Doody and Katharine Rogers, for instance, both refer to Mrs. Ireton as a slaveowner in their commentaries on *The Wanderer* (Doody 358, Rogers 150).

James Somerset who claimed that his imprisonment onboard a ship bound for Jamaica was illegal. Lord Mansfield eventually judged that while certain colonial laws and practices might permit slavery, that English common and contract law did not permit it, implying that slavery was illegal in England (Chater 92). While the Mansfield Decision was (and is) notoriously difficult to interpret, even its most narrow interpretation means that Mrs. Ireton does not possess the authority to send Mungo back to the West Indies (Jones 15). The combination of Mungo's laughter and Mrs. Ireton's misunderstanding of current English legal practice works in conjunction with Burney's stereotypical portrayal of Mungo supports Roxanne Wheeler's reading of *Robinson Crusoe* about the ambivalence of colonial narratives, "It is possible to read *Robinson Crusoe* as a vindication of the European, specifically the British, colonial spirit *and* an exploration of its fissures" (55).

The Mansfield Decision circulates at the margins of *The Wanderer.* Never explicitly referenced, it is the absent legal narrative which nevertheless informs the complexity of the scene between Mungo and Mrs. Ireton, demonstrating the ever-present tensions surrounding remembering and justifying the impulse to possess and oppress a racial other. Indeed, the Mansfield Decision itself functioned as an interpretation of the relationship between history, memory, and law, arguing that the institution of slavery functions as a "positive law," or what amounts to an irrational law. This irrational law, however, sustains its force even when the pragmatic justification for its purpose fades from memory:

> The state of slavery is of such a nature, that it is incapable of being introduced

> on any reasons, moral or political; but only positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasion, and time itself from whence it was created, is erased from memory: it's so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law.

In both *The Wanderer* and *Robinson Crusoe,* the impulse to justify the irrational results in narrative fissures because the narratives only achieve coherence by forgetting something of importance. Readers can see these fissures most clearly in Robinson Crusoe's depiction of Friday's naming. As Crusoe narrates, "And first I made him know his Name should be *Friday*, which was the Day I sav'd his Life; I call'd him so for the Memory of the Time; I likewise taught him to say *Master,* and then let him know, that was to be my Name" (149). Although Crusoe's naming of Friday works purportedly as a memorial, Julia Prewett Brown argues that the Crusoe's impulse backfires and results in historical error:

> As critics have noted, Crusoe does not ask Friday his name, he gives him one, a gesture that may be read simply as another instance of that 'unabashed propaganda' on behalf of British imperialism. But a curious equivocation accompanies the naming of Friday. Culminating the elaborate pattern of giving familiar names to unfamiliar phenomena in the novel, the naming of Friday boomerangs just as Crusoe's effort to turn a tree trunk into a boat had backfired. At the end of his adventure on the island, Crusoe learns that the calendar that he has been keeping for decades is inaccurate, which means of course that Friday, named for the day he was found, is misnamed. (36)

The impulse to impose names – which we have seen range from eloped wife, to frenchified swindler, to black imp, to Friday – necessitates the authorization of certain narratives of the self at the expense of others. As a text keenly aware of the politics of naming and possession, we might say that *The Wanderer* anticipates Ernest Renan's insight from his 1882 essay, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?": "Forgetting, and I would even say historical error, is an essential element in the creation of a nation" (qtd. Appiah 6).

## III

Friday, of course, only appears at the end of *Robinson Crusoe.* A large proportion of the narrative relating his island stay is concerned with how Crusoe adapts himself (or even imposes control) on the landscape of the island. Michael Seidel suggests that this impulse to colonize the island spaces parallels Crusoe's propensity towards fiction-making: "The fantasy structure of *Crusoe* is dependent not only on the construct of an island space onto which Crusoe imposes his double sovereignty, open and hidden, but on the way he materializes experience, on the way he accumulates, builds arranges, and stores. Life for Crusoe is a kind of exercise in material possession and possessiveness" (Seidel, *Island Myths,* 56). Julia Prewett Brown suggests that Crusoe's role as a storyteller and namer is most evident in his relationship to the constructed spaces of his island homes. In order to make sense of his island stay, Crusoe recasts space on the island in familiar forms, which for Brown is essentially an act of memory:

> When he first arrives on the island, the natural environment possesses for him a

> radical otherness, such that he cannot even name the things he sees and must settle for approximations … The island resists comprehension by language, and Crusoe's physical efforts encounter a similar intractability … In building his enclosure, Crusoe draws on memory to replicate the spaces he has known in the past … Defoe places emphasis on memory as both an ordering principle and a tool that facilitates invention, investigation, and classification. (Brown 32, 37)

Utilizing traditional feudal language, for instance, Crusoe famously names himself "lord of the manor," with all the rights of possession the title entails, yet none of the conventional obligations to (non-existent) subjects: "I was Lord of the whole Manor; or if I pleas'd, I might call my self King, or Emperor over the whole Country, which I had Possession of. There were no Rivals. I had not Competitor, none to dispute Sovereignty or Command with me" (94). Of course, because Crusoe at this point in the narratives has no real subjects (Friday has not yet entered the story), his delight at the title of lord is strangely evacuated of any real meaning, yet the action itself is a significant psychological impulse which Defoe cannily develops throughout the novel, and which Burney will press on as she traces Juliet's wanderings through the New Forest.

Juliet herself tries to forge her own relationship to the landscape, away from the colonizing fiction-making of her British counterparts. In the best Romantic tradition, Burney finally sends Juliet out of a repressive society into nature. Seemingly pursued by everyone, Juliet "[becomes] again a Wanderer" (655). After journeying far into the countryside, Juliet approaches the New Forest, which she hopes will be a home of primeval purity, a perfect New Eden. At first, "the terrified eagerness with which Juliet

sought personal security, made her enter the New Forest as unmoved by its beauties, as unobservant of its prospects, as the 'Dull Incurious,'" of James Thomson's poetry, "who pursue their course but to gain the place of their destination" (674). Instead of functioning merely as a refuge for Juliet, the Forest becomes the desired end of its own pilgrimage, and in the midst of nothing "but trees and verdure," Juliet finds a kind of peace and freedom she rarely experienced in social world of Brighthelmstone:

> Here, far removed from the 'busy hum of man', from all public roads; not even a beaten path within view; not a sheep walk, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage to be discerned; nor a single domestic animal to announce the vicinity of mortal habitation; here, she began to hope that she had parried danger, escaped detection, and reached a spot so secluded, that all probability of pursuit was at an end (675).

Overcome by the beauty around her, Juliet asks herself, "What lesson can all the eloquence of rhetoric, science, erudition, or philosophy produce, to restore tranquility to the troubled, to preserve it in the wise, to make it cheerful to the innocent – like the simple view of beautiful nature?" (676). Juliet experiences a kind of ecstatic vision of her place in nature, a place of power like that constantly desired by Elinor: "Here, for the first time, she ceased to sigh for social intercourse: she had no void, no want; her mind was sufficient to itself; *Nature, Reflection and Heaven seemed her own!*" (676, emphasis added). Through her access to and recognition of the natural beauty around her, Juliet believes that she can mentally approach, inhabit, even possess, the landscape through a mental process of recursive self-reflection. Juliet, in this moment, ultimately tries to

remove herself from the circulations of stories about possession that she had experienced throughout most of the novel by indicating that she has no desire or need – "her mind was sufficient to itself."

Burney, however, destabilizes this refuge, and will not allow Juliet to "own" Nature. Within just a few pages, Juliet finds herself lost in the New Forest, whose name, instead of celebrating Juliet's new identity as powerful participant in nature, reflection, and heaven, paradoxically suggests that Juliet re-inhabits her usual position as solitary wanderer again, exiled from her proper place in a community: "Where, now, was the enchantment of its prospects? Where, the witchery of its scenery? All was lost to her for pleasure, all was thrown away upon her as enjoyment; she saw nothing but her danger; she could make no observation but how to escape what it menaced" (685-6). Despite her insistent portrayal of society as corrupt, repressive, and indifferent to the needs of women and the poor, the New Forest provides little safety or refuge. Juliet's ecstatic vision lasts only as long as the landscape remains benign and comforting. The moment night approaches and she finds herself lost, the New Forest becomes just as menacing and claustrophobic as Mrs. Ireton's drawing room.

*The Wanderer'*s representation of Juliet's failure to acculturate herself to an alternative landscape and narrative suggests that Burney might have felt skeptical of any attempts at voluntary removal from the community. Indeed, one of the only successful moments of fiction-making in the novel occurs when Sir Jaspar spins an elaborate, whimsical narrative in order to help alleviate one of the more pressing features of Juliet's poverty – repaying accumulated debts. What makes the attempt successful seems to be its

inclusion of Juliet as a narrative partner. In order to gain some measure of financial independence for herself, Juliet has engaged in teaching harp lessons to the children of local gentry, a service she could not provide were it not for an initial investment in appropriate instruments, music, and clothing with funds helpfully supplied by the officious Miss Arbe and her silly friend Miss Bydel. When Miss Bydel comes seeking restitution, Juliet begins to confess that she has not the money, only to be interrupted by Sir Jaspar: "In your debt, good Miss Bydel? Have you forgotten, then, that the young lady has paid you?" When Miss Bydel demurs, Sir Jaspar then pointedly redefines the service he renders not as financial help to Juliet but as a support to Miss Bydel's knowledge of the past: "I shall merit your gratitude, by aiding your memory" (422). When Juliet continues to question Sir Jaspar's memory of the past, he includes Juliet's "forgetfulness" in his work of fashioning a collective memory of the past: "'Over you, too, then,' cried Sir Jaspar, with quickness, 'have I the advantage in memory? Have you forgotten that you delivered, to Miss Bydel, the full sum, not twenty minutes ago?'" (422). Sir Jaspar's version of the past is curiously de-centered despite his self-proclaimed position of omniscience. Rather than providing one authorized version of what did happen to the money, he *speculates* – he humorously suggests that Juliet might have put the money in Miss Bydel's workbag and that both have simply forgotten. Sir Jaspar thus implicitly invites alternatives explanations for how Juliet placed the money in Miss Bydel's workbag – encouraging Juliet and Miss Bydel to join him in recreating a past that never actually happened. Burney concludes the scene by comically noting, "Mr. Scope, with a look concerned, and even abashed, condolingly began a harangue upon the frail tenure of

the faculty of human memory" (424).

## IV

Patricia Meyer Spacks argues that Burney comparison of Juliet to Robinson Crusoe ultimately is one of gloom, "Juliet, too, is recovering from her dream of independence. Fanny Burney's imagining of a female Robinson Crusoe is an imagining of despair. For Juliet as a heroine must struggle not only with the obstacles supplied by a hostile physical and social environment but with those created by her own standard of femininity" (187). Juliet certainly fails to achieve complete financial independence and when she tries to remove herself completely from the economy in her retreat to the New Forest, she discovers terror. Juliet is also often at the mercy of other characters' attempts to colonize her by their own malicious fiction-making attempts, usually through creative and extended attempts to find names for Juliet. Juliet almost seems to invite such attempts. Sir Jaspar, struck by her beauty more than by her transgressive disguises or behaviors, wistfully asks, "What is it you have about you that sets one's imagination to work?" (435). We see therefore that Juliet is often not the one who builds fictions, of vocations, spaces and landscapes, or possessions, as Crusoe does, but is herself the object of fiction-building by other characters. In the end, other characters behave as Robinson Crusoes towards her by giving her names and creating stories to fill the vacuum her silence has left. The comparison to Crusoe seems to require the reader to read carefully – to trace the ways in which Juliet is patently *not* like Crusoe – and then to remember. The comparison

asks the reader to work at one step remove from Burney's explicit narrative choice in naming Crusoe as most like Juliet and recall other moments or characters in *Robinson Crusoe* which more closely align to the presentation of Juliet's own experience, which, in this case, would be Friday. As with the marginal presence of the Mansfield Decision in the text, Friday ultimately exists as a lingering trace in *The Wanderer*, unnamed, but not forgotten.

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